LEARNING / F1
IN EDUCATION
An Earth Day lesson plan

LEARNING / F4
What I've learned:
Sara Siguion-Reyna talks of growing up

BUSINESS / B1
Gov't sets P2B for post-harvest facilities

NEWS / A2
Fertilizer crisis looms after China hikes levy

METRO / A25
Ex-LRT workers win case in SC on P208M in back pay

No fortissimo? Keep it down, symphony told

LONDON—THEY had rehearsed the piece only once, but already the musicians at the Barenboim Radio Symphony Orchestra were suffering. Their ears

NO FORTISSIMO, A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, April 21, 2008 ★★★ 11 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 133 P10 website: www.inquirer.net

Armed men reported staking out Satur's house

By Marlon Ramos, Anselmo Roque and Norman Bordadora

UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN BELIEVED TO be police officers caused alarm among the neighbors and security aides of Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo after they were seen staking out his residence in Quezon City yesterday morning.

ARMED MEN, A6

Ailing Cory thanks nation for prayers . . .

By Tarra Quismundo and Gil C. Cabacungan

WIPING AWAY TEARS, AILING former President Corazon Aquino thanked the nation that has been praying for her recovery, in her first television interview since she was diagnosed with colon cancer almost a month ago.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everybody praying for me. I'm really overwhelmed. I never thought . . ." Aquino trailed off, her voice weak. "So I continue to pray for others who are also in this same situation."

On Saturday, the former President attended the first birthday celebration of her grandchild James, her daughter Kris Aquino's son with basketball player James Yap. It was on this occasion that she

MORE, A10

CORY'S BUZZ

FORMER President Corazon Aquino and her daughter Kris with son James are shown during the taped TV interview. ABS-CBN NEWS

. . . greets Estrada on 71st birthday

By Nancy Carvajal

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada received a call from former President Corazon Aquino on Saturday who greeted him, "Happy Birthday."

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III learned about his mother's call to Estrada when he attended Estrada's 71st birthday party on Saturday night.

"President Estrada said he was happy my mother called him up to greet him on his birthday," Aquino told the reporters during the party at Estrada's house on Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan City.

Aquino said his mother reminded him to attend Estrada's party Mrs. Aquino was one of the prime movers behind Estrada's ouster from office in 2001.

ESTRADA, A6

Poor warned: Rice can be political tool

Cabral: Protect access cards

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SOCIAL WELFARE SECretary Esperanza Cabral yesterday urged the poor to be vigilant once cheap rice becomes available in their communities, warning that the "access cards" that would allow the poorest families to buy government-subsidized rice might be used as a political tool.

"There is no system that is perfect. It can be used as a political tool if the community will allow it, so vigilance is really very important," Cabral said in a phone interview.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development, through local government units, will provide the "poorest

POOR WARNED, A2

FIREFLY BRIGADE Thousands of cycling enthusiasts join the "Firefly Brigade" in a yearly pro-environment tour of Metro Manila to mark the global observance of Earth Day tomorrow. JAY CAYABAS

80-year-old gets award for poems on nature

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THIS GANGLY PROFESSOR HAS an arsenal of frank, simple Filipino words he uses to create drama and poems aimed at inspiring people to save Mother Earth.

"My works cannot save the environment per se but they can help [in educating] the public more effectively, especially when you communicate to them in their native tongue," Prof. Tomas Ongoco, president of the Quezon City Academy, told the Inquirer in an interview on Friday.

For using his gift with words and poetry for environmental exploits, the octogenarian ecowarrior was named one of the six recipients of the Fr. Neri Satur Award for Environmental Heroism by the EarthSavers Movement.

"Duly recognizing those following the path of public service of Father Satur will strengthen the movement of caring for Mother Earth and encourage the commitment of the youth to the stories of courage and contentment to be emulated in their conception of work," said EarthSavers founder Heherson Al-

80-YEAR-OLD, A13

Low credibility bodes ill for GMA riding out crisis

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

ILL WINDS OF SUMMER POR-tend one of the government's capacity to ride out the gathering storm over the spiraling food prices are blowing from the opinion polls.

The portents come from the March 28-31 Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey which found that President Macapagal-Arroyo's net satisfaction rating had dropped to -26 percent in the first quarter, down from the 2005 levels when the administration was rocked by

LOW CREDIBILITY, A20

Laughter keeps his cancer at bay

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

JULIAN ROSELIS HAS KIDNEY CANcer, but it hasn't stopped him from living—or laughing.

Diagnosed in July 2006 with renal cell carcinoma, Roseles has amazed family, friends and doctors by how he has been handling his condition.

Roseles and his friends like to joke that he is now on "overtime," having outlived the life expectancy for people with this rare type of kidney cancer.

Roseles' wife Dex says it is a miracle that her husband is still alive after almost three years since being diagnosed with late-stage cancer.

JULIAN Roseles' Easy smile and cheery disposition to cope with kidney cancer. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"For me, it's a miracle that he is still alive. It's also a miracle how we are surviving," she says.

Roseles adds that people with his condition have only a 5-percent chance of living over five years.

Dr. Efren Capistrano, his surgeon and classmate from grade school to high school, says Roseles' irrepressible sense of humor is a major factor in keeping his cancer at bay.

"He carries his cross very well and he carries it with a smile," Capistrano says. "He has the uncanny ability to crack jokes about his condition."

LAUGHTER, A12

Pope prays at Ground Zero, meets survivors

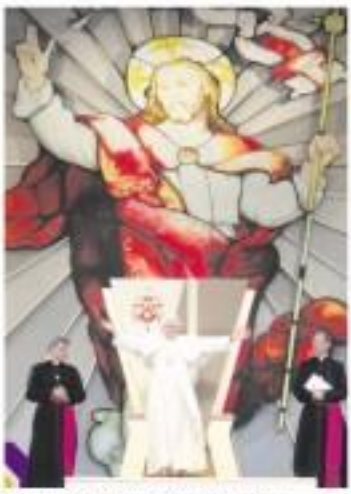
NEW YORK—POPE BENEdict XVI began the final day of his American journey by blessing the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on the World Trade Center and pleading with God to bring "peace to our violent world."

The visit by Benedict to Ground Zero was a poignant moment in a trip marked by unexpectedly festive crowds anxious to see the former academic who for three years has led the world's Roman Catholics.

Benedict was driven to the perimeter part-way down a ramp now used mostly by construction trucks to a spot by the earth tower's Kuperstein. He walked the final steps, knelt in silent prayer for a few moments, then rose to light a memorial candle.

Addressing a group that

POPE PRAYS, A2



POPE Benedict XVI blesses the faithful at the end of a youth rally at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUBTRES
5 28
6 2 4 5 3 0
2 6 9

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
7 8 9 12 17 25
P25,514,103.60

Price of fertilizer next to rise

After China hikes levy, solons seek ban on export of commodity inputs

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A LOOMING FERTILIZER CRISIS IS COMPOUNDING the country's bogie of stabilizing the supply and price of rice and other food products.

After China jacked up export levies on fertilizer by more than 100 percent last week, senators rallied on Malacañang to move quickly and impose an export ban on fertilizer inputs, specifically sulfuric acid and sulfur.

All countries are now scrambling to stock up on this commodity to deal with the food crisis worldwide.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said President Macapagal-Arroyo had been informed of the looming crisis in fertilizer, a key ingredient in the government's program to achieve rice self-sufficiency, and was considering the proposal of legislators to impose an export ban.

Yap confirmed that China, which supplies 26 percent of all inorganic fertilizer used in the country, increased its export levies on the importers agricultural input.

Yap said China's move should compel the Philippine to act to protect its own interest." All countries are thinking of their own food security and are taking steps to ensure that they have enough tools for production at their disposal. I believe we should also think about our own interests," said Yap.

"I strongly urge government to take steps to solve the problem by banning the export of fertilizer components, especially to China, which in return exports it back to us at expensive fertilizer," said Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

Aside from banning sulfur exports, Zubiri urged the government to push the use of organic fertilizer to cushion the impact of the higher cost of artificial inputs.

Rep. Abraham Mitra had earlier rolled on Malacañang to suspend the export of sulfur for at least six months to ensure an adequate fertilizer supply for local farmers during the rice planting season through August.

High fertilizer prices will set back government hopes of boosting the basic staple's supply and reining in prices.

The export ban proposal, however, is meeting with objection from the country's biggest producer of sulfuric acid—Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Pasar).

Sulfur is a byproduct of the precious metal smelting process.

Pasar has reportedly devised ways to close shop if the government adopts an export ban on sulfur, claiming that overseas sales of the byproduct has helped offset the high cost of its smelting operations.

WHAT'S INSIDE

CHOCOLATE
Hills in running for 'wonder' /A8

HOUSE OPENS
with food security on agenda /A10

Huge wage hikes bigger problem than rice, says economist

By Doris C. Dumlao

MORE THAN THE RICE CRISIS, the clamor for hefty wage increases could spell trouble for the Philippine economy, a regional economist of Standard Chartered (Standchart) bank has warned.

In a report titled "Philippines: Troubling Wage Developments," Hong Kong-based economists Dennis Wong said the government seemed well-positioned to handle the rice crisis given its much-improved fiscal position. But large wage increases, he said, could create a dangerous home-grown spiraling of consumer prices that could weaken the economy's capacity to withstand the effects of the impending recession in the United States.

"An eventual wage agreement that exceed sectors as being too generous will have undue negative impact," said Wong in the report dated April 10.

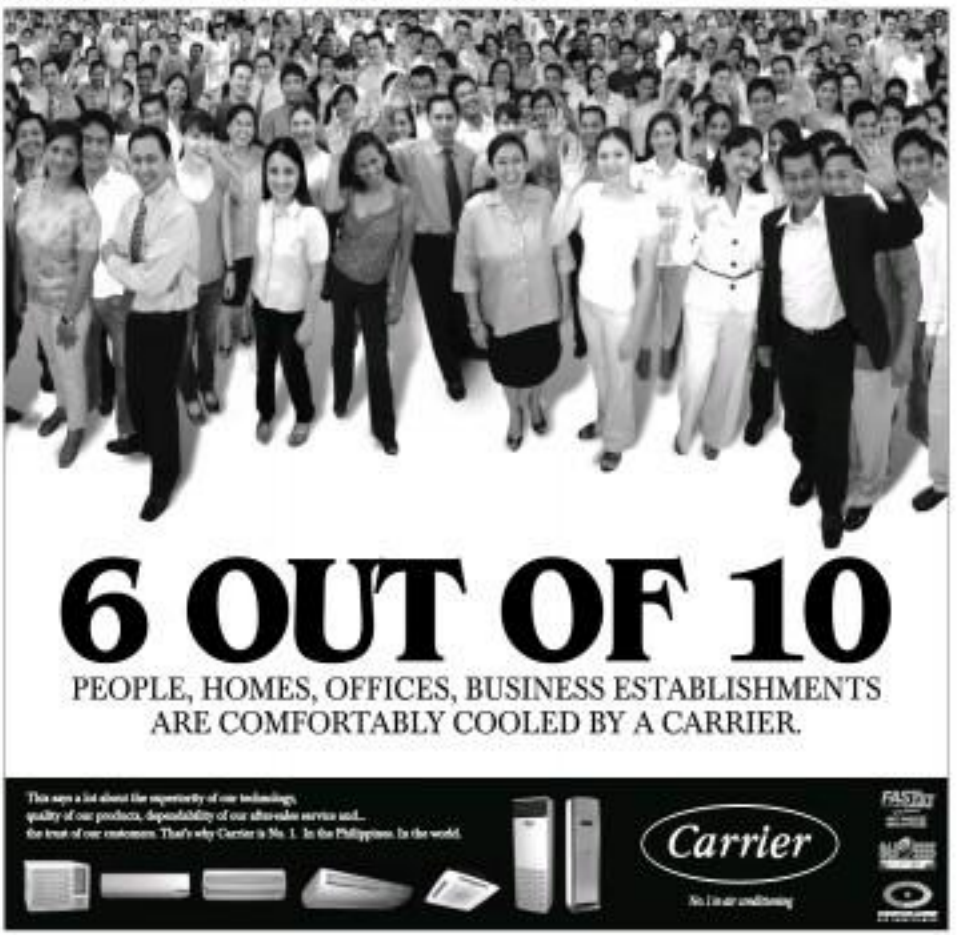
Standchart, the first foreign bank to set up operations in the Philippines 131 years ago, said there was cause for concern the recent jump in inflation (a 26-month high of 4.4 percent in March) would have an impact on wage developments.

The government has announced a 10-percent pay hike for its one-million strong workforce beginning July to cost P16 billion, the bank noted.

The report said a hefty wage increase for the rest of the labor force would stir up fears of a "home-grown inflation spiral" that would prevent the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas from further reducing interest rates to perk up the domestic economy.

"In a time when the business sector is faced with a collapse in US demand, rising wage rates and interest rates are the last things the economy needs," Standchart said.

When the inflation rate is on the rise, central banks tend to increase interest rates to reduce the incentive for consumer spending.



Cops hope music will soothe public's soul

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE HAS released a music CD of songs extolling the virtues of its members.

"It's to wake up the people to the good things policemen do for the community," said PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Nestor Barandon.

Barandon said that for now, the CD would be distributed to police stations for playing during operations and to other stakeholders. The CD may be distributed to the public depending on availability, he said.

Titled "Mamang Pulis," the CD contains 14 songs. On the cover is a photo of Director General Avelino Razon.

The carrier single titled "Mamang Pulis Salamat Sa Iyo," composed by Robert David and sung by Israel de Paso, thanks policemen with its reggae beat for serving the community in and for the circumstances.

"Ming Pulis, Bilib Kami Sa Yo" is a discomfort done by the "Sine Bumb Emmons."

"Bayani Sa Puso Ko" sung by children of policemen celebrates the men in uniform despite the public's negative perception.

The Police Community Relations Group produced the CD and holds the copyright.

Alexis Romero

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GMA favors 'singit' planting

By Christine O. Avendaño

TO BOOST RICE PRODUCTION IN A COUNtry that has become the world's biggest rice importer, President Macapagal-Arroyo is encouraging farmers to resort to "singit" planting.

"Kung dati ramos-a-five ibinte ni superover in another round of planting in irrigated rice lands.

Mr. Arroyo raised the idea during a teleconference last week with local government executives in the producing provinces like Agusan del Sur, Misamis Occidental and Cagayan.

The governors and mayors said they were expecting a good harvest in the coming months. They also told her of their other concerns, including how to cope with the rising cost of fertilizer.

They said 'yes'

"If we give you fertilizer and hybrid seeds, can you do singit planting?" she asked. Mayor Aloe Alfonso of Aloha, Cagayan, Alfonso welcomed the suggestion.

Mr. Arroyo made the same suggestion in Davao del Sur. Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, who also replied in the affirmative.

Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde said Mr. Arroyo was encouraging planting "in between the rice cropping." Normally, irrigated rice lands are planted two to three times, depending on the land, he said.

The government recently increased to seed subsidy to rice farmers to boost their production.

Correction

IN THE APRIL 19 issue, the story "Lozanes gets full authority over re..." claimed areas of Hundred Islands" and the caption of the accompanying photo misstated that Hundred Islands is the mayor of Lingayen, Pangasinan. He is the mayor of Alaminos City, which was the city granted authority over the reclaimed areas of the Hundred Islands.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Chino Roces Avenue corner Shaw Blvd., Mkati City, Fax No. 897-47-93/98, e-mail address: dayded@inquirer.net.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or other ethical lapses in news in the Publisher, e-mail address: promkt@inquirer.net.ph or fax No. 897-47-93/98 pr. Attn: The Publisher. My phone number is 897-4000 Local 3301.

Poor warned: Rice can be political tool

By [illegible]

...of the poor" families with scores cards to enable them to buy rice distributed by the National Food Authority.

Cabral said the bonuses that there could be "leakages" in the systems, where those in control of implementing it might corner the commodity in favor of relatives and friends. "There is always a danger in any system where the target is the poorest of the poor," she said.

She said her office had started making a list of households that would receive the seven cards. Families earning a monthly income of P4,500 and below will be given priority, according to the DSWD.

As for the total number of poorest of the families, Cabral said her office was still validating DSWD records to see how they matched the results of the family income and expenditure survey.

Thumbmarks a must

A 2006 survey said the incidence of poverty in Bicol was 1 in 4 or 7.1 percent, accounting for 1,981,000 families. Figures gathered by the DSWD from 2000 to 2003, on the other hand, showed that 800,000 families were living on the poverty threshold. "We will have to validate these figures," Cabral said.

The NFA earlier announced a plan to pull out government-subsidized rice—which is sold at P18.25 per kilo—from the wet markets and sell it directly to impoverished consumers in barangay and town halls.

The pullout plan was triggered by reports that rice dealers who can afford commercial activities that sell for more than P30 are themselves lining up in the wet markets, depleting the supply of NFA rice.

The Department of Agriculture is pressing to place the new distribution system to prevent hoarding by wholesalers and ensure that the cheap rice lands on the needier tables.

Random checks

The family access cards will contain basic information about the beneficiaries and have their thumbmarks and the names of the members of their households.

The cards will be issued to the heads of households.

To ensure that the NFA rice will reach the official nonfoods, the DSWD will validate the list of beneficiaries and conduct random checks of the list in town halls. "This is community empowerment so everyone in the identified neighborhoods must be so grated to ensure that the rice will go to those who deserve it," Cabral said.

She said the poor communities should be able to ensure that the NFA rice went to those who cannot afford to buy high-priced varieties in the markets "because they know each other."

Don't blame GMA

"Monitoring will be easier because they know who are the poor and the rich in their neighborhoods and those who are really the residents," Cabral said to Filipinos. "If they see people who don't deserve to get the rice, they should complain."

Cabral assured said Inquirer.net that the DSWD would make the system effective. "We have to be very shifty" and make sure that it is implemented properly.

Worldwide problem

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the people should not blame the spiraling cost of rice on President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Bunye cited foreign media reports which said that rising food costs were a worldwide problem and not limited to the Philippines.

"Recent coverage in international publications support what we have been saying all along: The rice problem is not unique to the Philippines nor is attributable to the President as her critics would want the public to believe," he said in his "View from the Palace" column.

Bunye said the government had an action plan to address the rice situation. This includes increasing the supply going after hoarders and price manipulators, and ensuring that government-subsidized rice reaches the poorest people. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

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Pope prays at Ground Zero, meets survivors

... greets Estrada on 71st birthday

From page A1

included survivors, clergy and public officials, he solemnly edged the many faiths of the victims at the "scene of incredible violence and pain."

The Pope also praised the "those who suffered dearly, injury and loss" in the attacks at the Pentagon and in the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. More than 3,000 people were killed in the four months of the airliners hijacked by al-Qaeda.

"God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world," the Pope prayed on a chilly, overcast morning. "Turn to your way of love those whose hearts and minds are consumed with hatred."

Benedict invited 24 people who took part in Ground Zero rescue. Survivors, relatives of victims and four rescue workers.

He greeted each member of the group individually as a bring quartet played in the background. In his prayer, he also remembered those who "because of their presence here that day suffer from injuries and illness."

Same consolation

New York deputy fire chief James Riches, father of a fallen hero, 11 firefighters, said the Pope's visit was important and gave him "a little consolation."

Hundreds of people stood just outside the site, behind police barricades, hoping for a glimpse.

The site where the World Trade Center twin towers once stood is normally filled with hundreds of workers building a 110-story skyscraper, a memorial and a transit hub. It bears little resemblance to the debris-filled pit where rescue and relief workers toiled.

Benedict was joined by New York Cardinal Edward Egan, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York Gov. David Paterson and New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine. The land is owned and managed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

At the Catholic Cardy Center of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, they were all told not to Pope Benedict XVI holy cards. Copies of Benedict's photo on display in the store window were selling briskly.

John Paul still the love

But the store's owner, John V. Iannelli, said his customers seemed to prefer the ones whose photo was on a rack inside the store. "To tell the truth," Iannelli said, "I'm still selling more John Paul pictures than Benedict"—by about 2 to 1.

Some 1,676 times at the Mount Carmel religious bookstore, Antonetta L. Mancuso, a regular customer, had gotten several times to see Benedict say Mass at Yankee Stadium on Sunday. But she, too, said she would be thinking of the previous pope.

"Hey, John Paul II—he was my hero," said Mancuso, 93, "I won't wait for them to make him a saint."

Mancuso summed up Benedict in two words: "He's new."

When Benedict arrived in New York on Friday for the first time as leader of the Roman Catholic Church, he stepped into the very long shadow of his predecessor—John Paul II, the great communicator, tutored actor, vanquisher of communism, acclaimed poet, celebrity pontiff. AP

Estrada's birthday

From page A1

The party, which was closed to the media, was attended by some 200 guests. The hostess was able to get in, courtesy of accreditation.

Expensive artifacts were pushed out as boxes thrown including to the formula restaurant.

The party was organized by Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, his sister Jackie and brother Jude, according to Jinggoy this was the first time birthday celebration after his father's six years of detention at his own house in Tanay, Rizal.

Billy King, previously of Le Gandik and once chef at Camp John Hay Manor's Le Chef de Bagnio Cuisine, reportedly Estrada's favorite chef, was called in on Thursday to personally prepare the menu.

Favorite dishes

King said some of the dishes he prepared, like fresh oysters, were gifts from friends especially from Estrada's son and abroad. He said Estrada requested that his Rice with Salmon Sauce and Caldereta be included in the menu.

Several long buffet tables crowded with food. There was also a toasted roll.

A small stage was erected with a framed poster of Estrada in background. There was performance by Vilma Corrales and Dulce.

'Daddy Lo'

Marc Lopez, 8-year-old son of Jackie and Reevie Lopez, sang a song for Estrada which he affectionately called "Daddy Lo."

Estrada wore a blue pinstripe shirt with fuchsia piping. His only accessory was his signature wristband.

The party was almost spoiled when former Gen. Angelo Reyes, addressing as President Macapagal-Arroyo in his speech: "The party is my concession privilege and I will not let other any ago." The remark drew hearty laughter from the crowd.

Run in 2010

Estrada said nothing about the 2010 elections but praised the officials of his Cabinet who, he said, "never deserted me."

Spotted at the party were Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President Manuel Villar, Senate with his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, and Senators Loren Legarda, Jinggoy Estrada and Francis Escudero. Also seen were Navotas City Mayor Toby Tiangco, a close friend of Estrada's.

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Chocolate Hills needs your vote to make 'wonders' list

TAGBILARAN CITY—BISHOP Jose Ure yesterday rallied to all Boholanos and non-Boholanos alike to rally behind the bid to get the Chocolate Hills on the list of the seven new wonders of the world.

"It is time we gave Chocolate Hills the salute it deserves," Ure said.

The mayor issued a call for online votes for Bohol's world-acclaimed hayrook hills, which is bidding to make it to the new list of the world's top seven natural wonders.

As of Saturday, Chocolate Hills was in seventh place behind Ha Long Bay in Vietnam; Got Bintar, Binaghabeh, Empire River, Bangladesh; Amazon River, which spans the South American countries of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; Mt. Everest, Nepal, and Cocos Island, Costa Rica.

Japan's Mt. Fuji was eighth, just ahead of another Philippine entry, the Tubbataha Reef.

Ure was appointed by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado head of the Chocolate Hills campaign in the United States.

"I see no reason why Chocolate Hills will not make it to the top seven," Ure said. "There is no other entry that resembles it."

The new seven wonders of the world campaign was organized by the New7Wonders Foundation.

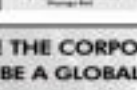
Making it to the list last year were Chichen Itza in Mexico; Christ the Redeemer, Brazil; Colosseum, Italy; Taj Mahal, India; Great Wall of China, Peiru, Jordan; and Machico Pechu, Peru.

New7Wonders founder and president Bernard Weber pointed out the difference between last year's search and this year's—"after man-made structures we are looking for treasures of nature."

To vote online, visit new7wonders.com. Voting ends on Dec. 31 this year.

Ure said casting a vote for Chocolate Hills was the least Boholanos, and all Filipinos, could do to express their gratitude to the Almighty for blessing the province (1,268 mounds consisting of dirtlorous confections that continue to fascinate. Otherwise, Ure said.

—Florentino Hofilena, Inquirer Visayas



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Naia faces another test

THE PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT failed on an safety standards test last year. Now, it remains to be seen whether or not it can pass an international security standards test.

A team from the United States Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is in town to conduct a five-day evaluation of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's compliance with global standards in securing its terminals, passengers and baggage, two senior airport security officials told the Inquirer yesterday.

The four-man TSA team will check whether or not security regulations being implemented at the airport's terminals 1 and 2 measure up to standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The security audit is part of TSA's latest round evaluation of airports that have US carriers and local airlines that fly to non-American states and territories.

Senior Supt. Efren Lubiang, chief of the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group, confirmed the security audit. "They will look at the security measures that we impose," he said.

Failing the test would mean carriers from the Philippines would face additional restrictions and processing procedures in the US. A bad rating could also affect travel and tourism promotions in other countries.

Last year, the US Federal Aviation Administration gave Philippine aviation safety system a failing grade, saying its airport control tower was understaffed and there were lapses in pilot licensing and aircraft in maintenance certification procedures. Personnel proficiency and even bookkeeping procedures were found to be below TSA standards.

The Civil Aeronautics Board has since taken steps to correct regulations and holds regular audits to check on compliance by member states.

—Steve Quiaoracho

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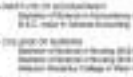

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 21, 2008
5th Week of Easter
Anselm

1st Reading: Acts 14:5-18
Gospel: Jn 14:21-26

Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever keeps my commandments is the one who loves me. If he loves me, he will also be loved by my Father; I too shall love him and show myself clearly to him."

Judas—not the Iscariot—asked Jesus, "Lord, how can it be that you will show yourself clearly to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make a room in his heart. He'll stay with me and I'll stay with him. He will not keep my words, and those words that you hear are not mine but the Father's who sent me.

"I tell you all this while I am still with you. Then now on the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I told you."

Commentary:

Jesus speaks of the Helper, the Holy Spirit who will abide with the Church after the ascension of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is our advocate, the one who teaches us how to pray and how to recognize the Lord's will in our lives. Just as Jesus instructed personally His apostles during His earthly ministry, so does the Holy Spirit instruct the hearts of the faithful. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate mediator in delivering the will of the Lord.

Come Holy Spirit! Teach us all things, that we might be truly wise and ever ready in the consolation of the Lord.

Armed men reported staking out Satur's house

Front page A1

"My morning was disturbed," said Ocampo.

Information gathered by the allied Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) showed that the men had shot firearms. Two vehicles and men riding tandem on motorcycles were spotted monitoring a compound in the vicinity of Ocampo's house.

Renato Reyes, Bayan secretary general, said the presence of the men in the neighborhood could be related to a murder case filed in Nueva Ecija against Ocampo.

On Friday prosecutors in Nueva Ecija filed murder charges against Ocampo, fellow Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza and former nongovernment Rep. Rafael Mariano for the killing between 2001 and 2004 of three rebel returnees—Danilo Felipe, Zaldy Perales and Carlito Bayudang—who were suspected of being agents of the military.

Back from Canada

Still reeling from a grueling 16-hour trip to Canada, a visibly tired Ocampo spoke with the media inside the 700-square-meter compound owned by the parents of his wife Carolina Malay.

Wearing a checkered shirt, Ocampo, the House deputy minority leader, said the men might have been policemen sent to arrest him.

"There were two teams of motorcycle-riding men who were riding in tandem that followed us," he said.

"They must have been trying to ensure that I wasn't going anywhere," Ocampo said. He said he didn't have anything scheduled yesterday except lunch at home with his family.

Ocampo said his security detail noticed the men when he entered the former Hills community early yesterday after arriving from his foreign trip.

He said plainclothes policemen were also deployed outside his house after a Leyte judge ordered his arrest in a similar case last year.

To head off any attempts to arrest Ocampo, his staff called members of the media to monitor the situation as his residence.

Ocampo's staff said a Honda SUV and a Toyota AUV that parked a few meters from the house were driven away when members of the media started to arrive at around 10:30 a.m.

Senior Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said that as far as he knew, no warrant had been issued for Ocampo.

Panel of prosecutors

Charged with Ocampo and the three other party-list leaders were Eugenia Magganay of Medicine; Vicente Cayetano of Kumagunan; Bolante; Stella Pimentel of Baby Ancheta, and Ernesto Nicolas of Pa'a, Tarlac, who were identified as top officials of the Central Luzon regional committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Nueva Ecija committee of the CPP New People's Army and National Democratic Front.

The other suspected members of the rebel group in Nueva Ecija, identified only by their aliases, were also named as respondents in the two counts of murder and one count of kidnapping with murder.

The kidnap for murder case was filed by a panel of prosecutors of Nueva Ecija, led by Assistant Provincial Prosecutor Antonio Lopez Jr., in the regional trial court in Gapan, Nueva Ecija. The two murder cases were filed in the Baloyan City RTC.

Persecution

The filing of the cases was approved by acting Nueva Ecija Prosecutor Wenceslao Pascua.

Ocampo called the charges "political persecution" intended to stop them from doing their legislative duties. He said the same charges were used against him and his fellow party-list representatives in the Commission on Elections so they would be disqualified in the 2007 elections. Those, however, were eventually dismissed.

Ocampo indicated that the new charges against him and his fellow militant lawmakers must have been brought about by the negative publicity they generated last week while abroad in connection with the human rights record of the Arroyo administration. "The case has been with the provincial prosecutors for a long time. They acted on it only now," he said.

Flawed

He addressed parliamentarians in Canada and told them of the number of extrajudicial killings in the country, while Casiño went to the United Nations in Geneva and to the International Parliamentary Union conference in Cape Town to counter administration reports on alleged improvements on the human rights situation in the country.

Lawyer Romeo Capulong, the lead counsel for Ocampo's group, said the filing of the cases was flawed from the beginning. He said the accused were denied due process while being investigated by the prosecutors.

He said he would file a motion for judicial determination of probable cause. He said the courts have yet to issue arrest warrants.

Capulong saw the hand of the Arroyo administration in the cases' filing, saying this was meant to "neutralize" his clients so they could not lead protest rallies amid the increasing prices of basic commodities, especially rice.

Complainants

The charge sheet identified the complainants as Medelyn Felipe, Isabelita Bayudang and Mayumi Perales, the wives of the victims.

The complainants claimed the murders were related to their husband's decision to leave the CPP and support the party-list Akbayan during the 2001 national elections.

Danilo Felipe was reported kidnapped on the night of Nov. 17, 2003, in Barangay Sarrasien in Cuimba town while on his way home aboard his 4-wheel drive tractor-driven farm vehicle. Felipe was reportedly taken to Sampaloc town, where he was reportedly tortured and later killed.

Jimmy Perales was killed on Dec. 23, 2005, while walking along the highway in Bongabon town. His assailants' car bumped and ran over him.

The attackers, however, mistook Perales for his brother, Ricardo, their actual target.

Carlito Bayudang was shot and killed on May 6, 2004, also in Bongabon town.

Jake Pinero Rondez, who identified herself as the leader of a security group at a meeting of rebel leaders in a house in Barangay Tagacay, Bongabon, sometime in August 2000, said Ocampo, Maza, Casiño and Mariano were present at the meeting.

Rondez said the four party-list leaders ordered the CPP/NPA officials to kill the rebel returnees who were suspected to be working for the military and who were supporting another party-list group, according to documents submitted to the courts.

The presence of the narrow-(in-ruling men in Ocampo's neighborhood came just a day before Congress is due to open session. It also came almost a year after Ocampo's brush with the PNP.

Bartolome said the PNP was willing to give police security to Ocampo "after we evaluate the threat to Ocampo's life. If there is an immediate need, then we can deploy immediately."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez does not think the government was involved in the monitoring of Ocampo's house.

"Why does he have a lot of this?" Gonzalez said when asked if he thought the government was behind the reported surveillance on Ocampo's house.

"We are monitoring you. These lefties, why should we monitor them?" he added. But he said it should be established first if the surveillance was true. With reports from Alcuin Papa and Gella B. Zalsos-Ortiz

Food security tops House agenda

By Marlowe Hernandez
Inquirer Research

AFTER A SEMIRECESS, Congress resumes its session this afternoon with food security on top of the agenda.

Speaker Prospero Nograles said yesterday all measures pending in the House of Representatives pertaining to food security should be addressed before Congress adjourns in June.

Nograles also said the chamber would pass a legislated wage hike if the regional wage boards fail to act on the adjustments ordered by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Food is the priority for everyone, not only for the House," Nograles told the business yesterday.

"All agriculture bills on food production and self-sufficiency will be discussed," he said.

Last session

The first regular session of the 14th Congress will adjourn on June 13, according to the House website.

In light of the rising cost of rice, Nograles said he would revive discussions on reproductive health measures, including one filed by Silvestre Bello, Sikad Laguiao, as the Philippine population continues to grow.

Two measures

Nograles and Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra have drafted two measures they will file this week addressing the food situation—one mandating corporations to go into food production for the benefit of their employees and the other is increasing the penalties against businessmen caught hoarding rice.

Other measures include House Resolution Nos. 312 and 314 filed by Iloilo Rep. Thomas Zamora and Gabriela party-list Representative Liza Maza and Luzviminda Ilagan, respectively.

Bunye's resolution seeks congressional power to Presidential decrees to deal with the rice crisis, while Gabriela's calls for an investigation into the increase in the price of rice.

Two measures

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Bunye's resolution seeks congressional power to President Arroyo

Immigration agents probed

AN OFFICER OF THE Bureau of Immigration has been relieved for alleged involvement in the trafficking of undocumented Filipino workers abroad.

Acting Immigration Commissioner Roy Almonte issued an order recalling Vic Ferrer, immigration officer I at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, to the bureau's main office in Intramuros, Manila, after the latter was implicated in the activities of 17 suspected illegal recruiters arrested recently by police.

Almonte said the bureau was watching another immigration officer who was previously assigned to the bureau but was now working at the DFA main office.

Almonte said the tips had come from Vice President Noli de Castro.

"The two officers will be afforded due process," Almonte said in a statement yesterday.

He said the second batch of 17 suspected members of an illegal recruitment ring was by a Chinese-Filipino businessman.

prompted the action against the immigration officers.

The Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said the suspected illegal recruiters were arrested after their victims sought Dr. Custodio Jolo Mangaoang Ortiz

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 133

OPINION

Immediate need

ARE WE BEING STAMPEDED INTO A WAGE INcrease? The international Standard Chartered bank seems to think so. An analysis by a bank regional economist based in Hong Kong suggests that the current rice emergency may be forcing both private and public sectors in the Philippines to hike off more than they can chew.

EDITORIAL

"[The] current boiling climate surrounding food inflation has clearly given teeth to demands for measures to assist low-income families, which spent a larger proportion of their income on food. This plus the timing of the public servant wage hike clearly increase the risk of the government giving more ground than usual," reads the Standard Chartered report dated April 16. (See the news story on Page A2.)

Set aside the delicious absurdity of the breathlessly mixed metaphors (boiling climate "clearly" giving teeth, retaining "clearly" at low ground)—is Standard Chartered on to something?

The "public servant wage hike" it refers to is the 18 percent salary increase government workers will receive starting July 1. President Macapagal-Arroyo is set to sign the executive order on May 1. Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the other Friday that the cost of the increase will amount to P12 billion; Standard Chartered estimates the increase for the government's military workers would tote twice that, or P24 billion. Either rate, it must be emphasized, is not a one-off cost, but an annual expense.

The "food inflation" Standard Chartered refers to is the subject of recent headlines: rice prices are going up, and in their wake the prices of other commodities too. But because the Philippines is the world's biggest rice importer, and a confluence of international realities including a shortage in supply has turned the rice trade into a seller's market, the country's own buying is a major factor in the higher cost of imports.

The "boiling climate" the bank refers to describes the current summer of discontent: the sight of the poor queuing up under a broiling sun, a general sense of government's underperformance feeding a growing sense of pain it—and, not least, the impassioned clamor for wage increases, to help counter higher costs of food and fuel.

The President herself has led the chorus of appeals. A week ago, she called on the regional tripartite wage boards to determine wage increases for private-sector workers. "Because of the increasing prices of fuel and rice, we are calling for a meeting of the regional wage boards all over the country to discuss how they can help the workers cope," she said in Calamba, Laguna.

Two big business groups, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines and the Makati Business Club, immediately expressed support for region-based increases. Since then, however, the public pressure for a salary increase for private-sector employees shifted emphasis, to a legislated wage hike. (The last time salaries were ordered increased through legislation was 1989, in the middle of the turbulent post-Cojuangco transition.)

All this, Standard Chartered fears, may set off a "homegrown inflation spiral." It noted that "the rhetoric that surrounds this increase [in government workers' salaries], timed to be approved before the Labor Day, is now closely associated with the latest food price spikes and risks setting off more aggressive demands from the rest of the labor force."

That, in fact, is exactly what is happening.

What is to be done then? It is crucial to note that local and international experts agree on the short-term nature of the rise in food prices; prices may stabilize later this year, and fall in a couple of years. The rise in oil prices, however, is more worrisome. What these two realities mean is that the immediate need is for non-wage measures, such as an additional rice allowance or income-tax rebates for minimum wage earners, to help tide over those most vulnerable to the higher food prices. The next step is for a proportionate salary increase, implemented nationwide but determined by regional boards to reflect regional conditions, to prepare all wage earners for the continuing uncertainty of an oil-dependent economy. What about an across-the-board increase of P125 per day mandated by Congress? This proposal looks tempting, but it may well prove indigestible.

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Power rates' turn to rise

AS THE PEOPLE ARE BEING BATTERED BY rising prices of rice, bread, corn, fuel and more, they will be hit by another burden: electricity rates, already the highest in Asia, will rise again in the franchise areas of Meralco. It is not because the cost of generating electricity has risen or there is a concrete solution.

It is because Meralco is too stingy to pay its debts to the National Power Corp. Instead, it wants consumers to pay for its shortfalls.

Meralco owes Napocor about P50 billion, including interest charges. It submitted these debts in 2003 when it signed a settlement agreement with Napocor. It acknowledged its obligations to pay the state power firm P27.6 billion in penalties for contract violations, and Napocor acknowledged a claim by Meralco for unfair transmission services for the same billion, resulting in a net obligation of P20 billion by Meralco. The power distribution firm promised to pay that way back in 2003.

It is now 2008 and Meralco has not yet paid a single peso of the debt, and because of interest charges, it has now ballooned to P50 billion.

Meralco now wants to pass on this debt to its unsuspecting subscribers by adding from P0.14 to P0.16 per kilowatt hour to their monthly bills over an 80-month period. It has already petitioned the Energy Regulatory Commission for approval of this dastardly scheme. This is clearly unjustified and the ERC should have rejected it outright. But what is scary is that the ERC under former Rep. Rodolfo Albano is taking such a long time to reject it. Albano's term is expiring in July. Maybe he is preserving his options.

It should be emphasized that Meralco incurred the debts at penalties for violating its contract with Napocor, and not in the interests of serving the public. Rather, it was to serve the interest of the Lopez family. Of course Meralco pays power producers First Gen, 9th, Sta., and San Lorenzo, similarly Napocor; it found liable for failing to deliver on its transmission services to Meralco, should not be allowed to pass on to the consumers the P7.465 billion claim of the Lopez group.

The irony is that power rates will increase not because there is a scarcity of supply, as is usually the case, but, on the contrary, an oversupply. How did this come about?

Meralco has a contract with Napocor to supply it with the electricity that it distributes to its subscribers. The contract stipulates that Meralco will pay a fixed amount of power from Napocor. The contract also states that if Meralco fails to use all the power it has contracted for, it will still have to pay it penalty. Which is odd: but because Napocor incurs expenses in generating the electricity for Meralco.

But Meralco has since companies that also generate electricity and with which it also has supply contracts. If the power demand is high, the power distributor buys from these companies. But when the demand declines, then was an oversupply of power and electricity. And instead of fulfilling its commitment to Napocor, Meralco favored its three sister companies and bought power from them, which, by the way had higher rates. (This is the style of cronyism in which the owners of a power distributor like Meralco also own power generating plants, allowing the conflict of interest in a major flaw of the Epira law and should be amended out of it. Meralco will inevitably have to accept responsibility.)

But Meralco also could not use all the power it contracted with First Gas and, under the terms of the contract, it is still obligated to pay for the unused electricity. Meralco gladly paid that to its sister company and passed it on to its consumers. That appears in your bill as P98 on purchased power adjustments. In short, the public is being made to pay dearly for Meralco's irresponsible power supply contracting.

Napocor is also charging the public with its own PIPs when its own plants became idle because Meralco failed to take the power it contracted to buy. Under the terms of its contract with Napocor, Meralco has to pay a penalty to Napocor. But while it is willing to pay to other company penalties, it is not willing to do the same with Napocor.

There were claims and counter-claims, Napocor for Meralco's penalties for contract violations, and Meralco for failure of Napocor to transmit power to its subscribers. Finally on July 13, 2000, the two power firms signed a settlement agreement whereby Meralco was to pay P27 billion to Napocor minus P7 billion in failed transmission services, or a net obligation of P20 billion. As said earlier, almost three years have passed and Meralco has not paid a single peso of that on that the obligation has now ballooned to P50 billion because of interest charges. This is what Meralco wants the public to pay by adding it to our monthly bills. What a crazy arrangement. It means Meralco is nothing its is bad decisions but makes the consumers pay for them. Any sensible person will see this as clearly a scam, but the ERC under Albano seems to be in a dragged sleep and does not see what everybody can see.

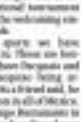
It is not longer that only the current ERC. Meralco's systemic fare charge to residential and commercial subscribers become 15.5 percent. The legal limit was 9.5 percent. The ERC also approved a new Meralco cost-saving scheme that is a retrogress monopolistic manipulation. It's P12.25 billion in one year alone. That is another republican conspiracy against consumers that will not end soon.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Time out

There's the Rub



Conrado de Quiros

Should Hillary quit?

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

ATLANTA, GEORGIA—THE BARACK OBAMA-Hillary Clinton duel for the heart and soul of the Democratic Party on the way to the party's official nomination in August is getting more intense by the day. It's making the party nervous because the protracted delay in choosing the standard bearer might give the Republicans a big advantage in pushing the candidacy of Sen. John McCain, who's already campaigning as though it's the general election in November.

Meanwhile, Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama seems on "rock star" campaign for the nomination enticed by the recent much-hollywood "swoon" by his former junior Sen. Jeremiah Wright "damning" America in the most vile sacrilegious manner. The media had a field day in practically playing up Wright's relentless attacks against the American "white" establishment blaming it for all ills imaginable, from the spread of AIDS to 9/11.

Obama took everything calmly and delivered a speech on race and politics, which ranged from "unacceptable" to "profound" to "just what the doctor ordered" to "disappointing" to "inspiring" and—the same media which Hillary Clinton had criticized as being soft on him while putting her on the defensive all the time. Obama dismissed his critics by a combination of eloquence and reason, saying in effect he could not disown Wright, which would mean disowning the black community that has given him support when had one never even dropped mention of ethnic stereotyping while he was growing up.

Lately, there have been calls or pressures coming from some quarters for Hillary Clinton to give up her quest because it is unlikely that she would be able to make up the difference of pledged delegates at this point. She would have to win in big double digits in the April 22 Pennsylvania primary and subsequent ones in Indiana, North Carolina, Oregon and Montana to overcome that lead. Obama's delegate lead translates into votes that will go straight down the wire. While Barack is ahead, it's not far enough to bag the magic number needed to win the nomination: 2,026. Or likely in the popular vote that Hillary edges him slightly in the "superdelegates" contest. It does look like the contest will be decided in that venue.

Superdelegates are elected and unelected leaders of the party like governors, senators, congressmen and party stalwarts in the Center and Democratic Party chair Howard Dean, who are uncommitted and can vote their choice. The latter in fact has indicated that superdelegates should vote their conscience because that is part of the process.

It is clear from now and Hillary is correct to take the position she has taken. There's a long way to go until the convention in Denver in August. She is understandably hopeful that she "can win."

She is a very determined candidate. If the contenders for the party's presidential ticket were a pair of Texans then the chances of beating McCain, she has a fighting chance. Now that the economy seems to have replaced Iraq as the major issue, she can argue that her grasp of economic issues is a big plus for her.

Most unfortunately for the race is between two eminently talented, articulate and heartbreaking candidates. Voters have a dilemma and it's not unusual to hear voters say either one will be great, and historic in the sense that in either case, the United States will have its first woman or African American as the helm.

University of Hawaii at Manoa professor Belinda A. Aquino is currently in Atlanta attending the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies.

Senior citizens and KFC

JUDGING FROM THE COMPLAINTS I RECEIVE FROM senior citizens on the violation of their rights under RA 9257 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003), the most abusive consumer chain in the country consists of franchises emanating from a multinational food company popularly known as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). For a while, I thought that the violations being reported were exceptions to the general rule brought about by aggressive, individual foreigners desiring to brighten up their investor figures. But apparently, Obando are not individual decisions but actions based on a nationwide company policy. Or at least, that is what is being cited by outlet managers when questioned about certain practices.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

Let me share with our readers a few examples.

In July 2007, Elizabeth Mandalad of Project 6, Quezon City, her husband and two cousins, all senior citizens, ordered food from a KFC branch located on Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City for take-out. They were denied the senior citizen discount citing "office policy" on take-outs. In September 2007, the Mandalads visited the same with the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in Quezon City based in Mt. Carmel Shrine, Diliman, City to show the law to our cousins. It DTC than powerful? It has been five months since this senior citizen request for reconsideration was made by OSCA. What else do ordinary citizens have to do to get positive action from government?

Dr. Estela Garcia of Congressional Village, Quezon City, complained about the same KFC branch on Mindanao Avenue. She ordered a bowl of arroz caldo for take-out and was denied her senior citizen discount. Letter complaints were sent to the OSCA in Quezon City but up to now, no action has been taken against KFC for violating provisions of the law covering senior citizens.

But perhaps the most heartbreaking experience with a KFC outlet was E. Rodriguez Jr. Street near Quezon City Sports Club. One of the victims was Mrs. Mercy Lopez, a senior citizen. Last month, up his way to St. Luke's Medical Center, he ordered a touch of disabled patients costing P38. His senior citizen discount was honored. On his way back after consultations with his doctor, he decided to take his dinner at the same KFC branch. This time the KFC management refused to honor his senior citizen discount privilege, insisting that it only applies to dine-in and not take-out orders. Needless to the law does it state that senior citizens can enjoy the privilege only once a day. How's that for a foreign company making profits from doing business in our country?

Perhaps it is time to raise this question: Should senior citizens consider boycotting all KFC outlets nationwide? There are other chicken restaurants in the country with even better tasting chicken and other food items. Why should senior citizens, should not all Filipinos, not just senior citizens, show their displeasure with KFC policies that violate Philippine laws and affect our elderly in a negative manner?

* * *

Calling all UP class 1958 alumni! Class '58 celebrates its golden jubilee during the Grand Alumni Homecoming on June 21, 2008 at the Quezon Hall Amphitheater. Its reunion theme is "The UP Same College Class '58 Foundations, led by its president, lawyer Ed Tumangan, is calling on all members of the class to be counted and take part in this special milestone in life. Contact the following for more details: Ed Tumangan, 536.1748; Annie Alfonso-Veneza, 921.3788; Ramon Basan Perez, 990.9798; Benjamin de Guzman, 726.7397; Luis U.E. Umerez Jr., 926.2094; and Rosella Jean Makalintal Pano, 924.2151.

* * *

Before I run out of space, I wish to acknowledge some handwritten letters from senior citizens in Mindanao. I am always appreciative of the efforts taken to painstakingly write down their notes and I thank the authors for their kind and generous thoughts on our work.

Retired BGF Lt. Col. Ernesto Rondez, a veteran of the Bataan Death March, writes from Davao City. He does not have any specific complaints. He merely wishes to share with us his pride in having been some where doing well in the military service. One is Army Brig. Gen. Fernando Morales (PMA class 1977), Fort Bonifacio camp commander and Col. Michael Mercado (US Coast Guard Academy class 1980) formerly with the PMA Corps of Professors. Zoe Mercado was once a little farming saleslady from manning the "apos." Congratulations on your two fine sons.

From Cagayan de Oro City, Mrs. Rosita Millalves, a retired city tourism officer, relates an interesting experience about senior citizen discounts and the use of credit cards. Appar- ently the always carries with her copies of the booklets and also on senior citizen benefits and the use of credit cards. When she was refused the prescribed 20% discount at establishments, she presents my articles to the managers and fortunately, they are open-minded enough to grant her the 20- percent discount. All that they ask is to return the articles so that they can show them to the store owner. This indicates that part of the problem is the very limited government dissemination of the senior citizen law and its implementing rules and regulations.

Mrs. Millalves also raises about her problem with KFC at the Limketkai shopping mall in Cagayan de Oro. She was not allowed to take out her order and enjoy the senior citizen discount. KFC "company policy" again in action against senior citizens!

Last September, Mrs. Millalves bought a birthday cake from Goldilocks north PHO. She was denied the senior citizen discount on the cake. It is not unusual to see such an order which excludes "expensive cakes" from senior citizen discounts. Apparently, senior citizens are not entitled to parties of expensive cakes. In the view of DTI, our privileges are only good for the cheap stuff. When she referred this matter to the DTI Regional Office, she was referred to the DSWD Regional Office—the usual game of passing the buck.

First of all, what an insulting DTI administrative order! Secretary Peter Favila and Undersecretary Ma. Victoria Isabel should look into this. Senior citizens would appreciate some action from them.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

A woman in three cultures

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

THEY SAY THAT ALL HISTORY IS LOCAL. THIS is a truism that we all have to learn, say even discover ourselves from what we see in daily reality. If we have to realize that the very identity of this nation is built on the different ethnic groups like Manila. And monumentally we talk about the rice crisis—which is non-existent from where I am—even if the national duties, this one includ- ed, cannot not address it.

For this we have and reality that we all have to wake up to, that not everything of substance in this nation takes place within the confines, pardon the feverish exploration, of imperial Manila. Manila is making such a magnetic pull, that at times even Davao has thought of itself as having its own identity crisis. Even Cebu, with its wealthy that some quarrels have said is the experpool of a future importation, really a kind of letter day upspoke that will never contribute to the emergence of a national identity that surpasses all regional superficialities. The anthropologist Antony speaks only for itself and less no one else be appreciated by the rest of time.

Davao is a town that since precisely has brought us a lot of memories, as the first planter, that engaged a spelled out for our benefit the every- something name of Museum of Three Cultures. But the story behind the name, and its message for certain, has to be told.

At the height of World War II's dreaded month of April 1942, the Japanese were systematically and solemnized a few days ago, there was a civilian refugee by the name of Leonarda Llamzon San Pedro. This is her story which deserves to be known.

It is a story that once her horrible version of in- human being tossed into a cell, caught in a Japanese location of concerned some being left on the roads to die, above all of hopes that were left to breathe their last at the mercy of—there it is Capitol College in 1971 that is now today's Capitol University, a private not-sectarian institution that is now to be ignored by the country's academic accreditation bodies where it has consistently ranked very higher than its own predecessors in the region.

If today Capitol University rings a mighty bell, it is also due to the fact that it has become a refined haven to artists from Manila and Samal—the in- migrants people of Mindanao. As herald then own culture in a world that now, more than ever, needs to be educated about the diversity of people in a globalizing world. Above all, that vision for man's education that began at the history of the Datuk Manik in Samal has several times been commemorated, and the future can arise themselves with to serve humanity instead of destroy it. Three cultures: M'anao, Samal and Tiruray lowland artgrams, all found a family to her subconscious space in Davao. And to Davao it has bestowed important values. There is a lesson here to be learned.

I may sound romanticized already. But I have to make this announcement that a few days from now, on the second of May the Museum of Three Cultures will open to the public in Mindanao, in Capitol University. On City Hall to be exact, where Leonarda San Pedro Rosales left most important- ly about the cultural artifacts of the people she served in her educational apostolate. There is a message over museums can tell the rest of his- tory about the Mindanao of long ago and of the hope. And at times, it takes a certain kind of an- cestry such as hers to achieve that.

It only because that audacity to badly needed in the 21st century of heightened awareness of peo- ples' identities, then it is timely for us to realize that the Museum of Three Cultures is here. And we have no need to leave our compartments of loca- tion. There is hope, Let me then invite you to the message of the Museum of Three Cultures in Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro City. You may forget Leonarda San Pedro Rosales, but you cannot forget her teachings.

* * *

Comments to montalvan@cu-cdo.edu.ph

An unnecessary breakdown in distribution

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ON THE SHOULDERS OF "BROKERS AND OMpowered Elites: The tale of new commissaries and technologies in democratic processes," a confession I recently attended at the Collegium for Interdisciplinary Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden, the subject of new names we were hearing were pure square (more, as it's now called, "the Global South." Because the main topic of the conference was communication technologies, and whether they help or hinder democracy, naturally a related question was: societies of crisis, in particular, a food crisis, every government's worst nightmare. Are these communication technologies going to?

The beginning, for example, was that Cuba has finally allowed its citizens to own mobile phones. There are understandably long lines of people who can't afford the average annual salary for a state job in Cuba (a $200). And this is just the cost of obtaining a handset. A Latin American recently pointed out that the average wage in Cuba is $19 per month, and you've got to pay for mobile usage, and since coverage can be spotty (many dropped calls), and phone that you are subsidized by the minute (so a few seconds' worth of interrupted phone conversation is still charged per minute), since end up paying 20 percent of your salary for a phone that's not worth it.

And yet, if one jumps from Latin America to Egypt, and from cellular phones to the Internet, the benefits of communications technology can be seen. If you view it from the perspective of democracy, democracy, as included "popular participation in national issues.

All the discussions on food, politics and democracy—how the prices of bread or rice can bring down governments, as in Haiti, or lead to challenges to authority, as in Egypt, have access to communications technology. Not only the formation of public opinion, but can encourage more panic or of food breakdowns against the public... get me drinking about how the long lines for rice have at home would many things we should hear in mind.

The first is that the lines may be long, but they are lines forming because some people want a particular kind of rice—cheap, low quality rice—and not because there is a shortage of all kinds of rice. They are—not yet, not right now—at the point where no one can obtain rice, period. There is rice, but there isn't enough of it for those who need it the most and have the least means to obtain it.

What is being spoken of here is a failure to get rice to the masses, and in the process point more and more money into the effort (which brings up the possibility of the deficit ballooning again), a quotient arises: is cheap rice being obtained by those who need it the most? Another critical question is whether in areas where subsidized rice is being distributed on an emergency basis, are everyone there is from the community the rice distribution's supposed to serve, or have the means that are supposed to benefit from the effort.

To be sure, the middle class is feeling the pinch, but if government's priority is to keep people from going hungry, there is a difference between spreading to the poor, and subsidizing their rice consumption, and the middle and even affluent classes consuming cheap rice. If the poor cannot obtain their need at this point, yet, or actually even buying bargain rice. What is curious about this, is that according to those who previously served in the present administration. The mapping of poor communities took place quite early on in the life of the current administration.

What happened to that information, and why is the rice distribution system proving itself unequal to what can only be called rhetoric? This, I think, is the real issue at hand and an issue on which it is time to judge the present administration. It has proposed nothing Catholic parishes [what about Protestant churches, or even the Iglesia, or mosques?] where it had already embarked on using public schools for the purpose. Given that the school holiday period, mind you). Why was the previous effort of mapping poor people set off the mapping exercises of the past?

If there is one thing the administration prides itself on, it's logistical competence. By hook or by crook it gets things done. It prides itself on achieving results, however messy the means used are. But this messiness is not the end. The end is the means is more often than not only solved when the President personally intervenes. This points to an inability to foster a functioning, responsible bureaucracy to do the job.

If a presidency that has been celebrating prosperity and progress should have enough of a measure of good will to be interesting to prevent protests and regime announcing they will assist to their people first, not because such a priority to wrong [it's an obligation], but because it is the only way to avert political resurrections. At the heart of this panic is a lack of information on one hand, and mistrust of official statistics on the other. La Niña, for one thing, is making possible three instead of two harvests in many: but so far, not enough information is coming from the local government units to the national government about these bumper crops will be mobilized to fill national needs after filling People's needs.

And there is. Finally, the question of social instability. All around the world, governments are fearful of unrest because of the food crisis. Unrest can present food can unite classes like poor and the middle, at least, but also the volatility but comes- continent in a common cause. When the effects of shortages are magnified by a combination of government inaptitude and corruption, the first victims of people is not people—its hoard. But it further breakdown in order takes place—impeding running boards, and then raising the possibility that even what scarce hoarded will can cost—then what? The benefits just might raise their Rub-against government. [ends]

Unlawful use of coco levy funds

LETTERS

WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR strong opposition to President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to use the coco levy for her administration's proposed "liberal coupon" scheme. (Inquirer, 3/20/08)

The coco levy is a special fund intended for the development of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the small coconut farmers. It is not part of the national treasury. This is what the law says, and Arroyo knows this. Worse, the coco levy cannot just be co-opted according to her whims.

In passing off the dazed coupon subsidy as a pro-poor program, the Arroyo administration has opposed its desperate search for ways to prop up its credibility, which is already at an all-time low. Worse, its proposal to reallocate the coconut levy is really a plan to steal funds from poor coconut farmers.

Worse still, the Arroyo administration would be violating several decrees and laws if it diverts coco levy funds to its dazed coupon program. We suspect that the Arroyo regime has been cautiously looking for ways to lay its hands on the coco levy funds. Last year, there was a similar attempt. Finance Secretary Margie de B. Teves said the coco levy funds could be used to offset the budget deficit. She only cited the foreseen reimbursement but given a compromise deal involving the coco levy funds (which is being brokered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government) it isn't appropriate.

Real pro-poor programs might help the administration to regain the confidence of a huge sector of the population. But a scheme that involves re-allocating coco levy funds for purposes other than what the law and the courts mandate is not such a program. That scheme would steal from the poor and would only fuel more discontent and further erode the Arroyo regime's credibility.

Instead of looking for ways to dip into the coco levy funds, the administration should be better off implementing the Supreme Court ruling and using the funds for its intended purposes—e.g., for the rehabilitation of the coconut industry and for the benefit of the small coconut farmers.

—SETH U. DAGUIM,
chair, Nueva Fortuna's Association of Zambosanga del Sur (DOBSAI)

It's P27.2 billion for SCTEX, in total

FIRST OF ALL, MAY WE THANK the Inquirer for publishing the letter of Gen. Rustico L. Ilarina (ret.), president and CEO of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), which was timely to set the record straight on the amount of the supplemental loan for the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) project. (Inquirer, 4/13/08)

May I point out, however, that the title used for the letter inadvertently cited the P6.3-billion supplemental loan as the actual project cost. The P6.3-billion supplemental loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) will finance, among others, the construction of three additional interchanges and access roads.

Let me clarify that the actual project cost of the 93.77-km SCTEX stands at P27.2 billion. Of this amount, P12.63 billion is the direct cost, including expenses incurred for civil construction works on the SCTEX. The indirect costs of P1.34 billion include land acquisition, resettlement costs, project management expenses and taxes and duties. Financing costs of P1.23 billion include Department of Finance (DOF) guarantee fee and JBIC loan interests during the construction period.

I hope this clarification will put the final issues on the SCTEX in project perspective.

—BRIG. GEN. ROBERT C. ARMACHAS, USMC,
Officer of the SCTEX Program Director, and SCTEX program manager for operational support cordon

Revive NBN project but keep ZTE out

THE ZTE SCANDAL IS FINISHED. What remains are the inconclusive small twitches or spasms of a dying beast. It does not matter anymore whether Rodolfo Lozada's revelations were true. Under the rules that determine what may be accepted as truth, there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations, which became louder and louder only in proportion after statement, tally after tally.

The cause of the opposition and concerned groups is lost. The Supreme Court's decision on the executive privilege issue has been laid to rest. The success of an appeal is remote.

Henceforth, what we should discuss now is whether that national broadband network project is worth implementing at all. Everybody seems to agree that it's important to our country's development. We must therefore pursue the same project, but perhaps through another entity, following a better and completely transparent process.

Behind the thought of involving ZTE in such a project 3rd runs that there are other companies which can partner with the Philippines on this endeavor. Let's BIR the moment, at least until between the administration and opposition, and let's focus on serving the people. Let's do the broadband project. If the government is failing to dark secrets, let's support its decision to revive the broadband project, because it's good for us. Shelving it because of the "heat" it would generate is to give in to all allegations that the government has involved in labo.

If you expand your house to give room for a growing family would you stop the project just because neighbors are saying you're using stolen money for it, even though you know the allegation is not true? Is whom would you give priority to: your family or your neighbor? (more tomorrow)

—VICTOR MANILAC,
victorjmanilac@yahoo.com

Megaworld CEO inspires 12-year-old

I'M 12 YEARS OLD. A RESIDENT of Interlaken, Pasig City. My mom read the article about the owner of Megaworld Corporation. ("Tanlo factory worker's son rises to the top," Inquirer, 4/13/08)

My mom showed me and asked me to read the article. After reading it, I was inspired. Andrew Tan inspires me to do better in my studies.

—KENNET ROSEL,
xiantan@yahoo.com

Across the NATION

CA clears way for fishpen demolition

ILLEGAL fishpens in Laguna de Bay are facing demolition with the latest order of the court. NONOY LACSON

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS allowed the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) to tear down illegal fishpens in the lake, as well as those owned by operators who have failed to pay fees.

The appellate court has lifted the preliminary injunction issued by a Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) that nullified the plan of the Federation of Fishpens and Fishcages Operators Association of Laguna de Bay Inc. concerning the P6,000-per-hectare annual fees charged by the LLDA because no hearing was held and it was not approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The federation, which said it had spent about P700 million to build the fishpens, had also argued that the fees collection should be suspended while its members recover from the devastation wrought on their operations by supertyphoons "Milenyo" and "Reming."

In a March 28 decision favoring the LLDA, the appellate court said the federation failed to show that it was entitled to the injunction and noted that no members had been paying earlier increases in fees even if these had no approval from the Chief Executive.

Executive order

The President's prior approval is not always needed in the first place, it added. Executive Order No. 927, which further defines the LLDA's powers and functions, allows it to collect fees for the use of lake waters and its beneficiaries, it said.

The ruling was penned by Justice Magdangal de Leon.

It pointed out that under the EO, the increase will only be subjected to the President's go signal if it is necessary, and upon the recommendation of the LLDA board.

The appellate court said the new increase from P5,000 per hectare in 1998 to P8,000 in 2002 was legally justified under another executive order that authorized government agencies to increase their fees by at least 25 percent.

"Undoubtedly, the federation's prayer for injunction based on its unfounded imputation of LLDA having illegally increased and reveal fees has no legal leg to stand on," it said.

"Consequently, there is nothing more to hinder LLDA from declaring illegal, and from demolishing, the fishpens/fishcages of the delinquency operators of Laguna de Bay," it later added.

It also ruled that there was no provision in the law requiring the LLDA to hold hearings before it could raise the rental fees, since the requirement was only for orders or decision to compel compliance with the provisions of EO 927.

Jurisdiction

Requiring the hearing for the rate increase would take away the LLDA's power to regulate operations in Laguna Lake and its exclusive jurisdiction to issue new permits for the use of the lake waters, as stated in the law that established the authority, it added.

"Besides, to further impose such a requirement will render nugatory the LLDA's exclusive jurisdiction and authority earlier described in [the LLDA Act of 1966], as amended, as well as its power of effective regulation and monitoring activities in the Laguna de Bay Region," it said.

The appellate court also failed to be persuaded by the federation's argument that they needed to recover from the destruction of their properties as a result of two strong typhoons.

"Much as we would like to commiserate with their plight, courts cannot simply act out of pure compassion without the right to demand relief having been duly established. After all, courts remain an allegation devoid of conclusive proof," it said.

The federation went to the Manila RTC in 2007 to stop the LLDA from imposing the increase in annual rental fees.

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NEWSBRIEFS

■ CUYAPO CITY

Chinay trader shot dead

UNIDENTIFIED gunmen shot dead a Chinese-Filipino trader on Saturday and took away some P100,000 cash.

City police chief Supt. Nilda Bongone said Jacob Jocson Sy, 38, was walking along Rizal Extension to his house when the suspect grabbed the victim's bag containing the money.

But before fleeing, the suspect fired at Sy. The trader suffered bullet wounds in his head and body.

The gunman used a gun on a motorcycle.

Edwin B. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ TAGUM CITY

Banana-laden truck torched

SUSPECTS in New People's Army (NPA) rebels torched a banana-laden cargo truck loaded with banana for export in Compostela Valley late Friday.

Business executive Hermogenes Ebarle said the truck bearing 480 boxes of banana was set ablaze by suspected NPA rebels at around 10:30 p.m., according to Chief Insp. Rodolfo Boy Jr., town police chief.

He said the suspects left a note describing "capitalist" the banana companies" and calling for wage hikes among banana plantation workers. Boy said the note was signed by the Militia ng Ama Command, an NPA unit operating in Southern Mindanao.

Fidelon Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

■ BAGUIO CITY

Murder raps vs Bayan Muna leader dismissed

THE REGIONAL trial court in Mt. Province dismissed the murder case against a Bayan Muna leader and another person implicated in the ambush slaying of a high-ranking New People's Army (NPA) rebel in July 2003 in Barangay Talubin in Bontoc town.

In a decision on April 10, Judge Antonio Palmaero of the Bontoc RTC dismissed the case against Jose Concepcion, commander of Regional Militia in Region I, and Leticia Bonosan after the repeated failure of the prosecutors to present a witness during the hearings.

The two were suspected to be part of a New People's Army group that attacked the soldiers, including Capt. Medinaldo Castro, according to counsel, said the case's dismissal was temporary. "It can be refiled by the other party (after two years). We agreed to the provisional dismissal because we do not want to prolong the detention of the accused," he said.

Christine Cabacsa, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ DAVAO ORIENTAL

Suspects in guard shooting identified

POLICE said they have identified the gunmen who shot to death the wounding of a prison guard in Mati City last week.

But City police Chief Senior Insp. Candido Saraña said he could not yet divulge the identities of jail guard Alejandro Malinao's attackers as the investigation is not over.

"As to the motive, it's definitely not work-related," Saraña said.

Malinao suffered bullet wounds in the chest and the right thigh but was already recovering," Saraña said.

Philline Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

■ CEBU CITY

Robbery suspect nabbed, charged

POLICE said they have arrested another suspect in the series of robbery incidents here last year.

Charges against Marjun Abong-Abong, city police chief, before the Regional Trial Court here.

Abong-Abong, of Barangay Tres de Mayo, was arrested last week in Sta. Maria town over his alleged involvement in robbery incidents here, according to Chief Insp. Antonio Pedoja, city police chief.

Among his group's victims were a retired teacher, who lost P200,000, and six elderly couple.

Earlier, police also arrested one of Abong-Abong's companions.

Edith Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

ANACEA bonnet bearing half a sack of unhusked rice walks under the newly constructed bridge of Subic-Clark and Tarlac Expressway.

Bringing cheap rice to poor

RELIGIOUS AND LOCAL LEADers in Bicol said the Visayas are joining hands to ensure that cheap National Food Authority rice goes to the "poorest among the poor."

Daraga-one City officials led by Mayor Agnelo Arellano, Daraga-one Bishop Arthur Bo and NFA representatives have agreed in a meeting on Thursday that the Catholic Church will identify persons authorized to sell NFA rice in the city.

Parishes said the agreement was formed up in view of the strong suggestion that NFA rice be sold directly to the people, rather than through the public markets.

"It would be very difficult to control the sale of the rice in the markets because it's difficult if the one selling it is a resident of the place, who is expected to know the people in the locality," the source said.

Parishes said the city government and Negros Occidental's second district Rep. Ernesto Ordoñez were willing to loan out some amount to prospective NFA retailers in the barangay for their capital.

He said at P16.25 a kilo, a retailer earns P1.20 or P75 per sing. The NFA, he said will supply 20 bags of rice to each retailer a week.

Parishes said the NFA would also sell sometimes rice at P25 a kilo in its outlets in the market town. He said it was expected that this will stop the control and increase of the price of rice, since this kind of rice is of high quality.

Seed money

In the Bicol region, parishes have started distributing rice to parishioners with help from Malacañang.

Priest Jay Nelson Wisa, social action coordinator of the Archdiocese of Caceres, said 30 Social Action of the parish-based rice distribution program received P120,000 each as seed money to put up NFA retail outlets to their parishes, under the "Kapuso sa Pandan, Dasoyong Alod Bayo" program.

Wisa said the budget for the chosen beneficiaries was given directly by Helen Grace Dilpero of the Presidential Management Staff to the lay persons in charge in each parish.

Chancery Liberty, project officer of the Caceres Social Action Foundation Inc., said Dilpero also facilitated the processing of the documents for an NFA license to operate in their localities.

Before the licenses were issued, a meeting with Malacañang and NFA personnel was held to discuss the program guidelines. Each beneficiary will get the volume of rice that each parish would get per week from the regional NFA Office in Pili, Camarines Sur.

Social sectors could sell a maximum of five kilos of rice per household at P18 per kilo.

Purchase and sales are to be monitored by the NFA and Malacañang through a record booklet given to the person in charge of the program, he added.

Wisa, however, said the price varies depending on the location of the parish and the handling expenses incurred.

Transport cost

In Barangay Bitoc, Camarines Sur, one of the parish beneficiaries was selling rice at P23 per kilo because of the transportation expenses incurred in bringing rice from NFA town to Bitoc.

In two months, 20 sacks of rice per sold out in two days. People in Camarines prefer to buy NFA rice at P22 compared to commercial rice sold at about P26 in the local markets," said Fr. Gilbert Brigares of Bitoc.

Liberty said their office was planning to expand the program to other parishes in the archdiocese.

They said funds for the NFA rice distribution program come from Malacañang, Office of the Archbishop and Department of Agriculture.

The Archdiocese of Caceres has 75 parishes, 38 of which are in remote areas.

NFA provincial manager Emelio Rivera said he has formed a team to monitor rice supply and violations in the market and in the 600 NFA retail outlets in Camarines Sur.

In Quezon province, poor communities in the Bondoc Peninsula would soon be able to buy government rice at P17 a kilo. Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, a lawmaker allied with the administration, said he would use part of his Priority Development Assistance Fund to subsidize the price of rice from the NFA, which sells at P18.50 a kilo.

No pull out

In Cebu City, the NFA rice sold at P18.25 per kilo would still be displayed in the public markets in Metro Cebu despite reports that it would be pulled out in two or three weeks.

Department of Social Welfare and Development Central Visayas (DSWD 7) regional director Teodulfo Bane said NFA 7 regional enforcement and information officer Edgar Diaz said they would continue to distribute cheap rice allocations in the different Bigasan sa Gloria sa Masipag stalls in each town.

Malacañang has earlier ordered the pullout of the cheap rice to the BSP outlets to ensure that the poor families could buy their supply through the Tindahan Natin (TN) outlets.

Instead, the rice from the United States would be sold at the BSP outlets at P32.50 per kilo.

Bane said the DSWD central office informed him that the scheme would be implemented in Metro Manila first.

If the feedback is good, he said, the new scheme would be adopted in other areas, including Cebu.

Bane said each BSP and TN outlet will receive 30 sacks a day, embroidery week.

Diaz said NFA 7 also requested that they would be given an allocation of rice from the UR, which would arrive next week.

Adequate

Diaz said at least four vessels carrying around 453,000 bags of rice would arrive from Vietnam and Thailand this week.

With the new supply, the current buffer stocks for Central Visayas would reach 1.6 million bags, which would be good for 67 days.

In Batangas City, NFA region al director Elvin Sabong said there is plenty of supply of commercial rice in the market "but nobody buys them because of high prices."

He said they had not yet pulled out NFA rice from the markets. He added local governments were also selling NFA rice.

The NFA-Batangas has set a limit of 2 to 3 kilos of rice for every buyer but an Inquirer visit to a selling store in April 14 revealed that at least 10 kilos were being sold per customer in Lipa and the buyers were mostly employees of the city hall.

In Batangas City public market, some rice vendors were complaining about the NFA rice bags, which were undersupply.

Rizalina Alexander (palawan), Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Marivic Rivadeneira, contributor; Romy G. Amarado and Rommel Sapallam, Inquirer Visayas

Cordillera Day in Abra town to call for pullout of mining firms

BAGUIO CITY—PARTICIPANTS in the Cordillera Day celebration on April 24 in Abra will denounce calls for the pullout of mining companies that have started exploration activities without the free prior and informed consent (FPIC) of their host communities.

Windel Bolinget, secretary general of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, said two mining companies violated a presidential policy when it did not consult members of the Binongan tribe of Banz-Licuan, Abra, prior to exploration and drilling activities in Mt. Capcapan.

Bolinget said the residents submitted a resolution to the Abra Provincial government asking its help in working for the pullout of the mining companies and the withdrawal of Army soldiers sent to their communities.

Human rights

He said the Olympus Pacific Minerals and its local partners, Abra Mining Industrial Corp. (Amic) and Abra Mineral Development Corp. (Admic), continued their exploration activities in early 2005 despite opposition from the residents.

Olympus only stopped its operations in August 2003 when the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Chairman issued an order to effect all exploration activities, he said.

"The company is refusing to complete the required FPIC, but the communities do not want mining," Bolinget said.

"Ignorance is not an excuse for violations of human rights. [The communities] also had no prior knowledge that there was a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) approved. Aside from that, their towns since 1950s applications in the area," said Hamor Mero, deputy secretary general of CPA.

Exploration

Secretary de la Cruz, regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, said Olympus had stopped its drilling operation but may become of strong opposition from residents.

But he said the firm was still working to get an FPIC and has applied for a mining lease.

Olympus, he said, signed a memorandum of agreement with them and filed on Nov. 23, 2004, to explore the 500-hectare project site on Capcapan. Amic and Admic have mining claims in Banz-Licuan. It said the MPSA approved by MGB.

But CPA leaders said the mining claims were among the alleged questionable claims certified by the BCIP in April 1998. The new claims were approved by MGB after the BCIP cancelled that claim were no pending applications for unreserved land and domain claims in the area.

Calamity feared

In a resolution issued on Feb. 26, the Binongan tribe members said the group Bahtak said they would not allow Olympus and other mining firms to operate in their villages because it would endanger their environment and resources.

"We believe that the entry of the large mining companies will ruin relationships that bind our community," they said. Bendrac Gabato, Inquirer Northern Luzon

SHY KID Bagan tribesmen participates in the Imbayah Festival, a tribute to the traditional rituals of the Bagan people.

Low credibility bodes ill for GMA riding out crisis

From page A1

the so-called Ester) tapes political crisis, which eroded the legitimacy of his administration.

The dip could not have come at a worse time for the government when the rising price of rice is signifies that the government is critically short of political capital and of public confidence needed to calm public anxiety over the shortage in the coming three months at least.

The lengthening queues of poor consumers at the National Food Administration outlets selling government-subsidized price at P18.25 a kilo are gnawing evidence as panic buying sets in to stock up supply for the lean months. These creations in the rice queues have fanned fears of looting similar to those that have erupted in recent months in parts of Asia and Africa by poor badly hit by high food prices, pushed up by food shortages.

The SWS survey found that the President's March 20-31 ratings were below those of the past two years, which ranged between -12 and -23 percent, and was more in line with her 2005 ratings. Her ratings declined outside Metro Manila, the center of political protest against the administration since the disputed 2004 presidential elections.

In the Visayas, Ms. Arroyo's net-total ballwick, her net satisfaction rating dropped to double digits, -15 percent, down from -8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007 for the rest of Luzon, excluding Metro Manila, her net satisfaction rating dropped to -25 percent in the first quarter from -12 percent, while in Mindanao, it dropped to -33 percent from -20 percent.

The survey found that the President had also lost ground in rural areas where her net satisfaction rating dropped to -26 percent from -9 percent. In the urban areas, the drop was more slight, at -27 from -23 percent. These ratings have been attributed to the Garci tapes scandal and to a resurgence of corruption scandals.

Result of tough decisions

The administration has branded off these perennially sub-horizon negative ratings as consequences of tough decisions that had led to dramatic gains in economic growth.

It has asked the public to focus on these gains, most of all, the 7.3-percent gross domestic product in 2007, the highest achieved by the country in 30 years.

The administration said the President "takes comfort in knowing that our country is on the move" and claimed "people are benefiting from these reforms and gains." If this argument had failed to lift her net satisfaction rating, there is even more doubt now over whether it is effective to provide her with the political capital she badly needs to serve a potentially explosive crisis posed by the increasingly angry and impatient queues at public rice distribution centers.

The rice queues represent an entirely different set of issues from those involving allegations of election vote-rigging and corruption. They hit the jugular of the poor—their stomachs and pockets.

The new survey results came amid reports that the government was moving deficiencies in procuring emergency rice supplies from the tightening rice export market to meet immediate local buffer needs.

GMA job on the line

These followed dire predictions from Danny Cooper, a senior economist with the International Crisis Council in London, that the Philippines is expected to pay around $1,000 per metric ton, cost and freight, at last week's tender and might pay an even higher price at its next tender in May.

"It will be $1,500 to $1,600 in May," he said. "They have to feed the population. The President's job is on the line." This remark disturbed the administration because it has a new narrative represented by the disjointed effort of the government to procure emergency rice supplies to stave unrest elsewhere.

Doubtful supply

Also, time since the 2005 crisis sparked by the Garci tapes has the President faced a more volatile crisis brewing from the threat of being overthrown by violence from hungry poor people as the rice unfolding lines. This has forced the administration to state unequivocally that the tight supply of rice worldwide would "not cause riots and unrest" in the country. It assured the people of a "stable supply and an effective distribution."

The assurance of a "stable supply" became doubtful as NFA officials reported last week that international rice traders that had told Filipino officials on Thursday's tender there was no more rice available in till the Philippines' orders. Press reports said traders were seeking a price higher than $672.50 to $1,225 per ton offered by the NFA. At Chief Ric the traded rate of imported rice would hit almost P49 a kilo, an NFA official said.

The Philippines has secured contracts for the supply of about 1.1-1.2 million metric tons, which is expected to arrive within the first half of the year. The NFA seeks to import 2.1 million MT to fill the local production shortfall to meet the country's rice needs for 2008. A new tender is scheduled on May 5 for the delivery of 300,000 MT to meet the June-June short-term needs to avert shortages.

Calm decoding

Surprisingly so far, there have been no calls for the resignation of the President, as there were in 2005. But this calm can be deceiving. The volatility of the unrest at the rice lines is such: it needs only a minor setback in the NFA's rice tender to trigger a Cooper of 105 meant when he warned that the President's job "is on the line."

This is what makes the emergency procurement represented by the tenders in May crucial. It is not just the amount but the timing that is important. Any delay in the arrival of the rice supplies from the May tender could be disastrous.

The government ill-prepared with any political capital of public confidence to avert a full-blown socio-economic explosion on the rice lines.

Its credibility is at stake here.

No fortissimo? . . .

From page A1

were ringing, heads throbbed.

Tests showed that the average noise level in the orchestra during the piece, "Ride of Valge," by the composer Imre Kiraly, was 97.4 decibels, just below the level of a pneumatic drill and a violation of new European noise-at-work limits. Playing more softly or wearing noise-muffling headphones were rejected as unworkable.

So instead of having its world premiere on April 4, the piece was dropped. "I had no choice," said Sygve Nordstoll, the orchestra manager. "The decision was not made arbitrarily; it was made for the protection of the players."

The cancellation is, so far, probably the most extreme consequence of the new law, which requires employers in Europe to limit workers' exposure or potentially damaging noise and which took effect for the entertainment industry this month.

Consequence of new law

But across Europe, musicians are being asked to wear decibel-measuring devices and to sit behind see-through protective screens. Conductors are shouting their requests. And orchestras are reconsidering the definition of "forte-piano."

Alan Gumey, an oboist and English horn player who is the chair of the players' committee at the Royal Opera House, said he and his colleagues had been told that they would have to wear earplugs during some three-hour rehearsals and performances.

"It's like wearing in a swimming pool—first they have to wear a blindfold," he said.

Already, there are signs that the law is altering not only the relationships between classical musicians and their employers, but also between musicians and the works they produce.

"The noise regulations were written for factory workers or construction workers, where the sounds comes from an external source, and to limit the exposure is relatively straightforward," said Mark Pemberton, director of the Association of British Orchestras. "But the problem is that musicians create the noise themselves." New York Times News Service

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Laughter keeps his cancer at bay

From page A1

With his easy smile and cheery disposition, one wouldn't think Boonz had cancer. "I was prepared for embarrassment, not [cancer]," he often quips.

His condition, however, is serious. His right kidney removed, Boonz is currently taking a drug which has so far reduced the size of tumors that have metastasized to his lungs. But the medication produces a side effect which requires him to undergo minor surgery or a delicate part of his body once or twice a week.

Between regular trips to the hospital, Boonz does financial and investment consultancy for overseas Filipino workers, helps out at home, meets with friends and even drives on weekend trips from his house in Capitol Homes in Quezon City to his ancestral home in Candon.

Boonz, with his typical irreverent humor, says he wants a gathering when he can be a participant.

"Sa burol ang bagal. Sa libo-ang-araw, ang sagana-sagana. Bata, bisdak! Sa sabi ko, ngayon na mag-celebrate para hindi ako sa kabaong. Para ako mismo ang makakita sa sarili ko na nagpapakahirap sa libing. Para ako mismo ang makakita kung sino ang mga totoong kaibigan. Para ako mismo ang makakita kung sino ang mga totoong nagmamahal sa akin. Para ako mismo ang makakita kung sino ang mga totoong nagdadasal para sa akin. Para ako mismo ang makakita kung sino ang mga totoong nagpapahalaga sa akin. Para ako mismo ang makakita kung sino ang mga totoong nagmamalasakit sa akin

80-year-old gets …

GMAGOCD

[illegible] in a letter to the Inquirer.

Alvarez, a former environment secretary and senator, instituted the award seven years ago in honor of the clergyman who was martyred in 1991 for protecting the forests of Bacolod.

Orgues yesterday received his medal in simple ceremonies at the Ateneo Law School over government station DZRJ Channel 8 in time for Earth Day, which will be observed worldwide tomorrow.

He was recognized for writing a book, "Kristel sa Tagpuan" or anthology of drama and verses popularizing scientific data.

Boasting the genius of environmental issues, the book also tackles the ills of smoking and even the use of plastic straws for drinking.

"Always are no longer appealing to the youth of today. They seldom go to the library anymore," Orgues said, explaining why he has devised Kristel" as a more creative way of educating the public about the environment.

Gore documentary

Aside from writing a "Bibliyasan on Climate Change," he translated into Filipino former US Vice President Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," the oscar winning documentary on global warming.

"Tinipon ako ngo iyong ilog ng mahining damodalay. Mga dahong kumakaway sa kahabaan nitong bangin … (Was look at the river, gently flowing by, you notice the wind washing the leaves …)" reads Orgues's version of the first few lines of the film.

Orgues explained Filipinos would be able to relate to the issues presented in the documentary, he said. He gave it a Filipino title, "Isang Hindi Dinatnguyan na Katotohanan."

"The Filipino adaptation is composed of 28 pages, which he worked on briefly for 12 days last month.

Blue skies

He memory shows episodes of inspi-…which he prefers to call "heartbreak stuff"—but the environmental educator can still clearly remember how his caring for nature started.

He recalled that while his friends were busy scouring his beautiful cousins, he would lie in a small banca in the river in his future hometown and gaze up at the blue skies and white puffy clouds.

Watching the clouds take various shapes and "producing morning sun of them" was like "reading Mother Nature's novel," he says.

Arbor Day

Since then, he resolved to become a writer while finding himself actively involved in environmental activities in school, such as gardening. Arbor Day was a special event for him as a young student, Orgues said.

A language elementary and high school teacher from 1952 to 1964, he had an early breaking of his vocabulary when he learned to read before he entered school. At age 5, he was already reading Jose Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo"—which somehow explained his penchant for Filipino literary classics.

He delivered his very first speech about planting trees when he was in Grade 1 on Arbor Day.

Aside from creating pieces on the environment, the professor translated into modern Filipino the two famous novels and other literary works, such as "Florante at Laura" and "Ibong Adarna," for students' use.

As for his book, "Kristel sa Tagpuan," it was so titled "because it came during my drought years," Orgues said with a chuckle.

With the encouragement of Cecilia Catolos Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission on Culture and Arts, he started writing the bulk of the poems in 2004. Two years later, the book was published. But some of the ideas for his poems, which mostly contained scientific information, dated back to 1998, he said.

In his poem "Panimdim an Bisaya ni Angui ha Hunanduhay," he presented the disadvantages of using plastic straws while he sings. He wrote: "Dai na ang mga daa, e, may ensuelo. Kilangan ovoy ortaw, di' ronon sa laoy [It's different to have straw. You need a straw so as not to drink from the bottle.]"

"Siyanit alam mo An kang aroma ay uno? Sa kalipay'o anong-hisa nirw? … Ayd'y yaring plastic, hindi nabubulok, sa lupa't tubigan, ay'y nang nalo! [But do you know what a straw is? And its effect on the surrounding? It's made of plastic, which doesn't degrade. It's a plague in land and in water.]"

Quit smoking

While elaborating the drawbacks of smoking to health and environment, Orgues explained the benefits of quitting the vice in his poem "Hinitgin ko Ito."

He motivated his readers to join the crusade for environmental protection in his first stanza piece "Ilgian ang Mundo [Save the Planet]."

"Ilgian ang mundo, ama-amo nga, ilig marakly dumiles, laging tahja-tahja. Subli kan si dinacing kanda," a line from the poem went.

"I am an activist but I expanded my knowledge in the subject through reading," said Orgues, who for a time served as acting director of the Science Foundation of the Philippines of the Department of Science and Technology. He says at the DOST also sharpened his understanding of the problems facing the environment, he said.

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil
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DID YOU KNOW

BEFORE it was claimed in the name of Spain, Manila was a Muslim settlement on the Pasig River banks. Its name was derived from "Maynilad," a mangrove plant bearing white flowers which was abundant in the area.
Cecil L. Mendoza, Inquirer Research

Ex-LRT workers win case in SC

Employees closer to collecting ₱208M in back wages

By Lolit B. Salaverria

WORKERS OF THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT who were dismissed in 2000 scored another legal victory after the Supreme Court threw out an appeal filed by their former employer, Metro Transit Organization Inc. (MTOI).

With the high tribunal's ruling, the 211 ex-LRT workers are closer to collecting P208 million in back wages and separation pay which the National Labor Relations Commission awarded to them in January 2007 after it ruled that their dismissal was illegal.

On top of the back wages, MTOI will also shoulder almost P14 million in legal fees. The three-man team constituted by the LRT Authority to manage and operate the LRT Line 1 which runs from Monumento to Baclaran.

According to the high court, the Court of Appeals did not err when it dismissed in 2006 a petition filed by the firm seeking to overturn the NLRC decision.

The 211 workers belonging to the Pinagsamang Lakas ng Manggagawa sa Metro Inc.-National Federation of Labor urged on strike in 2000 following a deadlock in negotiations with management over a collective bargaining agreement.

Illegal dismissal

They were later fired for refusing to comply with a return to work order issued by the labor department. In turn, the workers filed a complaint for illegal dismissal and unfair hearing with the NLRC.

In 2004, the NLRC ruled in the workers' favor, a decision that was contested by the MTOI. The firm filed an appeal with the commission which was turned down; so, a petition for certiorari was then filed before the Court of Appeals but its pleading was also thrown out because it failed to file a motion for reconsideration with the NLRC.

In its April 14 decision, the Supreme Court said the MTOI prematurely went to the appellate court.

It agreed with the Court of Appeals that the Duty should have filed first a motion for reconsideration with the NLRC after its appeal was dismissed.

For the MTOI's pleading to be granted, it should have shown that there is no more appeal or other "plain, speedy and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law."

ATTENTION-GETTER A participant in yesterday's 30th Tour of the Pinoy Pedal stands out in his one-of-a-kind costume. The yearly bike tour promotes the use of bicycles to reduce air pollution.

Kids mark Earth Day through art contest

By Allison W. Lopez

MORE THAN 70 CHILDREN EXpressed through art and dance just how vital water is to life during a celebration of Earth Day in Armscor Forest Park in Makati.

Mirant Foundation, the park caretakers celebrated the event with the theme, "Water is Life," under the canopy of indigenous trees that circle inside the 2.2 hectare park.

"I think it's alive again. We're here on a regular basis, every Saturday, and we have a lot of volunteers helping us. There's also more bird patches in Armscor," said Mirant Foundation president Regina Reyes.

Several children participated in the art contest, one of the highlights of the celebration. Reyes said the contest was aimed at educating the youth about the importance of water to nature and how parents could emphasize this to their children.

"By conducting creative and fun activities like this art contest, we hope to instill among the young ones love for the environment and awareness of the need to protect and preserve trees, animals, water and other parts of our natural environment," she added.

The contest began at 9 a.m. with children working on their drawings on tables set up in the area fronting Pasig River in their parents' naked eye. The competition, sponsored by Marsable Philippines Inc., drew 69 participants aged 6 to 12 years old.

Cultural Center of the Philippines president Nes Jacela, painter Phyllis Zaballero and portrait artist Ing de Pio later assessed the entries and proclaimed Hannah Mandella, 7, as the winner in the ages 4-7 bracket. Kayla Isenzberg, 7, was named the first runner-up while Clarence Aaron Ilas, 7, was second runner-up.

In the ages 8-12 category, Jeremy Tiangco, 12, was named the winner followed by Julian 11-year-old Vikram Hakhwal and Axl Rose Lucang in second and third places, respectively.

A BOY fiercely concentrates on his drawing, one of the entries in an art contest to mark Earth Day. EDDA D. SA-O

Citizen's call

Bad news and good news

LAST April 7...as I was trying to get a cab under the Buendia Flyover near the corner of Edsa in Makati City, fare wars ensued by...looking for passengers. The driver of a Jeepney Tsuyi refused where I was going. He refused to give me a ride when I told him my destination. (South Avenue) because he only wanted to take passengers to Makati City, even if South Avenue is in Makati. I called the attention of a Barangay Bel-Air village policeman nearby about the cab's behavior, but he did not move a muscle. I then reported the incident to the DOTC Hotline 1590. The telephone operator (Noemi) asked me for details and assured me he would relay the complaint to the taxi company's operator. I later received a call from the taxi operator who apologized and assured me she would take action against the erring cab driver. Later, I got a text message from the DOTC, asking if the taxi operator had already called. That day, even if I was disappointed about not getting a ride and with the inaction of a Bel-Air village policeman, I was pleased with the prompt response of the DOTC Hotline. That was a pleasant surprise.

ADRIAN ALIMA, Makati City

Yellow lanes for Commonwealth Avenue

CALLING the attention of authorities concerned: Yellow lanes should be designated for public utility vehicles and bike lanes, too, on Commonwealth Avenue (Manuel Villar-to-Ayala Avenue) in Quezon City. It's a madhouse out there when you travel on this stretch. No semblance of order or discipline at all!

JASMINE ABELLA-BAUTISTA, Camarin, Caloocan City

'Not our water pipes'

REGARDING the leak on Industry Road in Makati City that allegedly damaged the thoroughfare as reported by Wil of MMDA Caloocan City to Makati Citizen's Call in the March 31, 2008 issue, our crew dug up the affected area and found out that the water came from a drainage canal. We don't have a pipeline along the area. Henry Rodas (and Ramil Gay), causing damage to the road. Thank you.

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES INC., Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City

Traffic at Rockwell

PLEASE take note of the heavy traffic near the Power Plant area on J.P. Rizal Street in Makati City, especially between E and Esp.cio., because of grills gat peopey be heard in the vicinity. I appreciate any action on this matter. Thank you.

CRISTY MERCADO, J.P. Rizal Street, Makati City

DARK AND DANGEROUS PLACES IN PASAY, PARAÑAQUE

From Franco Javier, 58, of Mandaluyong City: "If the Department of Tourism and the local governments of Parañaque and Pasay are serious in their campaign campaign and concerned about the safety of their residents, can they please clean and light up the dark streets from the international airport to 'Buena in Pasay City to Tambo in Parañaque City? It looks like they have been practicing "Earth Hour." Without the lit billboards, this part of Metro Manila is dark and dangerous, which is bad for the tourism business, motorists, residents and pedestrians."

(ED's NOTE)

2 fires hit Metro; fireman hurt, ₱3.5-M property lost

By DJ Yap and Allison W. Lopez

TWO FIRES BROKE OUT WITHIN MINUTES of each other in Metro Manila yesterday morning.

At 9:24 a.m., a fire hit a residential area in Punta Sta. Ana, Manila, destroying eight houses and leaving evaluators Bernardo injured.

SFO2 Emmanuel Cuspar of the Manila Fire Department said Aaron Antonio of the Mandaluyong Volunteers suffered minor head injuries after he was hit by falling debris.

Cuspar said the fire began in the house of Raymond Figueira at 1254 Santos St. It reached the fifth alarm at 9:26 a.m. and was put out nearly an hour later at 9:21 a.m.

Damage to property was estimated at ₱2 million.

Through an investigation is still ongoing, fire officials said they were looking into the possibility that the blaze was caused by unattended electrical appliances.

Meanwhile, a 4-year-old boy left playing with a lighter was believed to have caused a two-hour blaze that left 50 families homeless and destroyed ₱1.5 million in property yesterday in Intramuros, Manila City.

The fire started in the residence of Rodolfo Pacanoco in Bahia Compound, Sang Gang Street, Luknaban Homes Subdivision, Pandacan, at 9:00 a.m. and spread to neighboring houses. Six investigators said.

In all, it razed 23 residential buildings made of semi-light materials before firefighters contained it at 10:00 a.m., according to a report by case investigator SPO1 Arnel Hernando.

Save Pateros River, gov't urged

By Kristine L. Alave

THE MAYOR OF PATEROS AND SIX DISTRICT expert yesterday asked the governments to save the stagnant Pateros River, which they said could overflow and drown the town during heavy rains.

Rommie Gonzales, executive vice president of the Pateros River Basin Organization who wrote a paper on the river's state and the C-6 highway and the Napindan Flood Control projects have stopped the flow of water in and out of the river.

As a result...the eight-kilometer waterway has become an "unflushed toilet" used by two million residents living not only in Pateros but also in the cities of Pasig, Taguig and Makati. It has also become a source of diseases like dengue fever and meningoencephalitis, he added.

With the global warming promising more frequent and heavier showers, town officials are afraid that the river will overflow and submerge Pateros in dirty water which will leave almost two million people homeless.

Pateros Mayor Joey Medina said the river has also killed the local industry. "What happened when the river died? The ducks also slowly died," he said.

MetroBriefs

Free cleft lip treatment

PEOPLE with a cleft lip or palate or cataracts can now avail themselves of free treatment at the Mandaluyong City Medical Center. Mayor Benhur Abalos yesterday said the project, which is also open to nonresidents, is a collaborative of the national government with the Philippine Band of Mercy providing free medicine. "We want to bring back the smiles on the faces of those with cleft lip and cleft palate as well as we want those with cataract to have better eyesight (Keith Pantoja). Everyone deserves to live and enjoy a normal life, and this is our own way of helping out," Abalos said in a statement. Those interested can call Jonny Linares, Mila Ramos and Dara Rabadon at 5319001 local 2301 or 5319106.

Kristine L. Alave

Cops attend antiterror seminar

TO BOOST the government's drive against terrorists, members of the Manila Police District have undergone a two-day seminar on antiterrorism. Supt. Alejandro Vanguardia Jr., head of the MPD special training unit, said experts from the US Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement supervised the program. "Through the seminar, we hope to boost the police force's antiterror capabilities," he said. He added that they also hope to improve their operations against human trafficking, smuggling, sex crimes, forced child labor and counterfeit documents like passports, visas and immigration papers.

Pinoli Santos

Ex-LRT ... From page A-01

quate remedy" that could be granted to it, the high court said.

"In the case at bar, petitioners directly went to the Court of Appeals on certiorari without filing a motion for reconsideration with the NLRC. The motion for reconsideration would have aptly furnished a plain, speedy and adequate remedy ... The Court of Appeals correctly ruled that petitioners' failure to file a motion for reconsideration against the assailed resolution of the NLRC rendered its petition for certiorari before the appellate court actually defective," it added.

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1.3 MILLION CONVERTS

Pentecostalism woos Hispanic Catholics in US

NEW YORK—FOR YEARS, Maria Sparacino Colasuno was a mainstay at her Long Island, NY, church, joining dozens of fellow Brazilian immigrants for the Portuguese-language Mass on Sunday mornings. But six years ago, her husband, Ramon, went to a relative's baptism at a Pentecostal church in Astoria, Queens, and came home a convert.

The couple made a deal: "We would go to the Pentecostal service on Thursdays and to Mass on Sundays, and then we would decide which one we felt more comfortable with," Maria Colasuno recalled.

Within 40 days, they had both given up Roman Catholicism and embraced Pentecostalism, following the same path as an estimated 1.3 million other Hispanic Catholics who have joined Pentecostal congregations since immigrating to the United States, according to a survey released in February by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

"I feel whole here," Colasuno, 42, said one recent Sunday in the dramatic sanctuary of the Pentecostal Church of the Pentecostal Missionary Church. "This church is not a place we visit once a week. This church is where we hang around and we share our problems and we celebrate our successes, like we were family."

As Pope Benedict XVI completes his visit to the United States on Sunday with a Mass at Yankee Stadium, he does so facing a growing challenge to the church's immigrant ranks.

Pentecostalism has more Hispanic followers in the United States than any other denomination except Catholicism; they are drawn, they say, by the faith's joyous worship, rich use of Hispanic culture and the enveloping sense of community it offers to newcomers. They are part of a global shift. Pentecostalism, the world's fastest-growing branch of Christianity, has made sharp inroads in Latin America, particularly in Brazil.

"That some of the newly arrived Latinos are drawn to Pentecostalism is certainly reason for concern," said Bishop Allen Vigneron Beck, the executive director of the Office for Cultural Diversity which was created last June by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to help the church adjust to its changing ethnic makeup.

"But we can counter that with the kind of music we use, with the sense of celebration that we bring to our worship, the spontaneity and some of the popular customs that are not part of the official liturgy of the church. We're doing some of that, but we could do better." AFP

Sadr threatens 'open war' on Iraq gov't

BAGHDAD—MOQTADA AL-SADR, the Shiite cleric who has threatened no less than anti-American chaos if his movement does not get a fair share of power in the government, has promised his militia is ready for "open war" against the Iraqi government unless it fulfilled a crackdown by Iraqi and US security forces on his followers.

The ejection of a Shiite cabinet minister in his confrontation with Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who has threatened to join the anti-American chaos if his movement does not get a fair share of power in the government, has promised his militia is ready for "open war" against the Iraqi government unless it fulfilled a crackdown by Iraqi and US security forces on his followers.

The ejection of a Shiite cabinet minister in his confrontation with Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who has threatened to join the anti-American chaos if his movement does not get a fair share of power in the government, has promised his militia is ready for "open war" against the Iraqi government unless it fulfilled a crackdown by Iraqi and US security forces on his followers.

"If they don't come to their senses and halt the [offensive] militias, then we will declare an open war until liberation."

Sadr's movement accuses other Shiite parties of getting their militias into the Iraqi security forces, especially in southern Shiite Iraq where various factions are competing for influence in a region home to most of Iraq's oil output.

Sadr launched two uprisings against US forces in 2004.

His movement then entered politics and backed Shiites in power in Iraq in 2005. But the youthful Sadr split with Maliki, a fellow Shiite, a year ago when the prime minister refused to set a timetable for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.

"Do you want a third uprising?" Sadr said, adding that he wanted Iraq's Shiite electoral establishment to set a date for the departure of American troops.

Sadr's Baghdad stronghold in Sadr City, one Maliki Army commander said he was "thrilled" about the statement.

"We will wait until tomorrow to see the response of the government. Otherwise they will see Mahdi Army like they have never seen before in their life."

Sadr's threat could spur events at a worse time. On Friday US forces said they had intelligence suggesting Ansar Islamic al-Qaida, packed out of Baghdad and western Iraq last year, was planning a return to the capital to stage major bomb attacks.

In Baghdad, police described bodies between security forces and gunmen that began on Friday in Sadr City as among the heaviest in the capital since Maliki launched a crackdown on the Mahdi Army in the southern city of Basra late last month.

Within said 12 people had been killed in the Shiite slum.

Hospitals said they received more than 130 wounded overnight. Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Israel retaliates after Hamas bombings

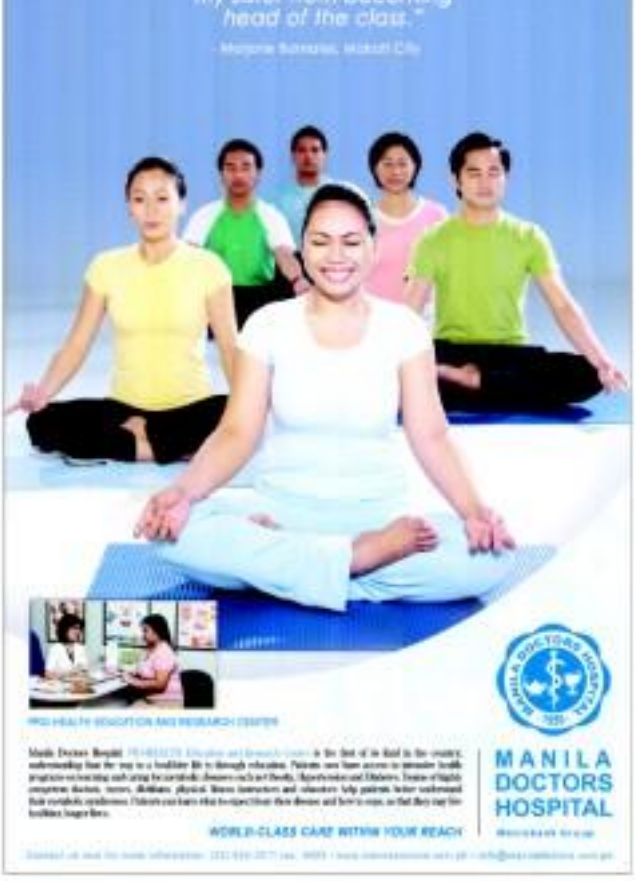
GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Israel killed seven Hamas militants in a series of air strikes after the group detonated two pipe bombs packed with hundreds of kilograms of explosives at an Israeli crossing on the Gaza border. Two of the militants were killed early Sunday. Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz ordered the strike of Saturday's twin suicide attacks, which wounded 13 soldiers, and warned Hamas would "bear the consequences." However, an immediate Israeli offensive appears unlikely—Israelis are currently marking the Jewish Passover holiday, and in May will celebrate their country's 60th birthday, with US President George W. Bush attending. The Islamic militant Hamas said Saturday's attack on the Kerem Shalom crossing was part of a campaign to break the nearly-crushing blockade of the Gaza, by force if necessary. Israel and Egypt virtually sealed Gaza after Hamas seized control of the territory by force. AP

Australia republic tops mind summit

CANBERRA—A "Healing Fund" and constitutional recognition of Aborigines, and a push for Australia to sever ties with Britain's monarchy, led ideas on Sunday from a summit of the country's top 1,000 minds. Sustained applause and calls for a vote on making Australia a republic before 2020, while economic heavyweights, including BHP Billiton mining chief Marius Kloppers, demanded Australians be 5th on the list of the world's richest citizens in a decade. "This has been a very Australian gathering," said Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in a standing ovation at the close of a two-day brainstorm-ing meeting charged with finding "big ideas" to improve the country's future by 2020. Hollywood actors including Bruce-simon Cate Blanchett, who brought her seven-old tandem twin, and-high Jackman joined scientists, artists, memorial-owners, industrialists and environmentalists for the power summit at parliament. Reuters

Cleric leads in Paraguay ahead of polls

ASUNCION, Paraguay—A former Roman Catholic bishop who regularly wears sandals and admires Che Guevara has a historic chance to take the ruling party's 60-year grip on power in Paraguay. The former bishop, Fernando Lugo, is a self-described defender of the poor who left the Church two years ago. He was leading in opinion polls two days before Sunday's election, which has been marked by accusations of dirty campaigning and claims that outside agitators are planning to destabilize the country if Lugo is defeated. Sunday will be only the 2nd time that Paraguayans decided a president since the fall of the dictator Alfredo Stroessner in 1989. AFP



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Julie Lourdes B. Gatus

Pentagon steering US military analysts

NEW YORK—IN THE SUMMER OF 2005, THE BUSH administration confronted a fresh wave of criticism over Guantanamo Bay. The detention center had just been branded "the gulag of our times" by Amnesty International, there were new allegations of abuse from UN human rights experts and calls were mounting for its closure.

The administration's communications experts responded swiftly. Early one Friday morning, they put a group of retired military officers on one of the jets normally used by Vice President Cheney and flew them to Cuba for a carefully orchestrated tour of Guantanamo.

To the public, these men are members of a familiar, featuring seasoned tens of thousands of times on television and radio as "military analysts" whose long service has equipped them to give authoritative and unbiased judgments about the most pressing issues of the post-Arpa. 11 world.

Hidden behind that appearance of objectivity, though, is a Pentagon informant apparatus that has used those analysts in a campaign to generate favorable news coverage of the administration's wartime performance, an examination by The New York Times has found.

The effort, which began with the buildup to the Iraq war and continues to this day has sought to exploit idiosyncratic and military allegations, and also a powerful financial dynamic: Most of the analysts have ties to military contractors wanted in the very war policies they are asked to assess on air.

Those business relationships are hardly ever disclosed to the viewers, and sometimes not even to the networks themselves. But collectively, the men on the plum and several dozen other military analysts represent more than 150 military contractors either as lobbyists, senior executives, board members or consultants. The companies include defense heavyweights, but also scores of smaller companies, all part of a vast assemblage of contractors scrambling for hundreds of billions in military business generated by the administration's war on terror. It is a furious competition, one in which inside information and easy access to senior officials are highly prized.

Records and interviews show how the Bush administration has used its control over access and information in an effort to transform the analysts into a kind of media Trojan horse—an instrument intended to shape favorable coverage from inside the major TV and radio networks. NYT

WHAT'S INSIDE
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Palarong Pambansa under way; NCR top favorite / A30

Welcoat ends slide, downs Purefoods

By Musong R. Castillo

PUREFOODS COACH RYAN Gregorio must have missed what Alaska coach Tim Cone said last week.

Or, he simply could not do anything about it.

Gregorio and his Tender Juicy titans became the first victims of Welcoat last night after the Giligas finally held it together in the endgame for a breakthrough 110-103 victory in the eliminations of the Smart PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Watch my word, Welcoat will surprise the PBA one of these days," Cone said Wednesday after the Aces pounced on crucial malgamet blunders by the Dragons and stretched Welcoat's losing streak to four games in the semifinal and 13 overall slicing back to the Philippine Cup.

Against the Giants, Welcoat are particularly flawless in the crunch.

Leading Rookie of the Year contender Joe Devance scored nine of his 30 points in the fourth period, including burying Beau Ayaka underboard for another 14 in the same stretch as the Dragons frantically opened fire to win for the first time in five games.

It was also the first victory for Welcoat in 150 days, or since a 95-91 upset of Magnolia last Nov. 16. The Giligas, 12-game duds in the rookie on the third longest losing streak in the history of the league.

"At least now I feel that I am in the PBA already," Welcoat coach Gabe Lucero, who took over from Leo Austria as the stars of the tournament, said in jest. "Definitely all the credit goes to the players, who never know when to salute or retire."

"Eto Coss told me that (after a 93-92 loss to Alaska) we can win, it's just a matter of time."

Barangay Ginebra remained as the only winless team later on after taking a 95-92 beating at the hands of talent-rawn Talagaville.

Magnolia improved to 2-2 after gaining a massive fourth quarter from import Jimmel Mobley and Danny Seigle. The Gin Kings slumped on to 0-3 and to be alone in the cellar, while Purefoods dropped to 2-3.

PUREFOODS Import Darius Rice (right) dares it in off Welcoat's Mark Isip in the third quarter of last night's game. ARIEL JAVIERA

Lascuña, Miñoza falter in the Beijing rain

BEIJING—FILIPINOS WILFORD LASCUÑA AND FRANKIE MINOZA struggled like the rest of the field in very difficult conditions Sunday to finish way behind at the Volvo China Open. Six-over Dusit duo in a hole on player broke par. Lascuña closed with an 84 after earlier rounds of 72-76-72 to wind up in a three-way tie for 38th at 298. Miñoza fared even worse with an 80 that left him in a three-day deadlock for 42nd at 304. Indian's Jyoti Sandhu Mukherjee scored his first victory on the European Tour, firing a 71 over 72 holes by nine strokes. AP

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Palarong Pambansa under way; NCR heavy favorite

By Jane Navarro

PUERTO PRINCESA (27th—CODE) (ed) as the bleeding ground of national athletic fest 2005 Palarong Pambansa unfolded with the traditional colorful opening rite late in the afternoon yesterday to spur the athletes, officials and guests from the opposite numbers host Occ province had to see officials last year.

The organizing Department of Education has guaranteed that eligibility problems, which bounded previous editions, would be a thing of the past even as the host city savored a weeklong fiesta staging of the games featuring the best elementary and secondary athletes from the public schools in the land.

At least 6,000 athletes from the 17 regions nationwide and about 10,000 officials gathered at the Ramon Mitra Jr. Sports Complex here during the kickoff rites highlighted by ethnic and modern dance performances and a fireworks display that was reportedly nearly million.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus representing President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest of honor during the opening rites.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, commissioner Eric Lozano of the Philippine Sports Commission, top local government officials from the host province and the city graced the affair.

The ceremony was moved to this office venue from the usual rail-mooring schedule after last year's opening was marred by the death of two officials.

Mimaropa—National Capital Region, vehicle support Tarah the elementary and secondary—Division On past two editions in Naga and Koronadal, is hastily lowered to rotate the championship.

The Big City bets will open defense of their crown today in athletics, where six gold medals are up for grabs out of the 55 at stake in the five-day competition.

Athletes hotbed Western Visayas and Ilocos region are expected to challenge NCR, which has reigned supreme even with the change in the scoring format from the mere number of medals to the most number of points won.

The participant's regards to the ball games and other disciplines also get going today while swimming meet venue will unfold at Sandoval Bl. golds up for grabs in both divisions for four days.

The point system was adopted three years ago in Iloilo to prevent medal-loaded regions from dominating the games to the detriment of the grass-roots participants.

Under the new format, placings in each event in athletics and swimming carry a certain number of points which are then added up to decide which of the 17 regions will claim overall supremacy in the Palaro. The champion in each sport first gets 10 points with the runner-up getting 08 and the third placer 13.

WORLD 8-BALL

Alcano shows way to Last 32

DIAMETER AMBITION Defending champion Ramon Alcano gets his game-face on before reaching the knockout stages.

ROMMEL ALCANO DEFIED RACK FROM three racks down and nipped Lin Hsiao-ch Chi-ma, 9-6, for a second-to-last win that propelled the defending champion to the next stage of the 32-man World 8-Ball Championship in Singapore Thursday night.

Alcano, apparently uninspired by his workmanlike 6-1 trouncing of Guatemalan Carlos Talavera in the opening round, struggled early against Lin, who scored a 6-3 lead.

But the 29-year-old dubbed of the star assisted Bert Pemberton recovered the skills that made him a double world champion last year to advance to the eight-day tournament.

The day's biggest reversal was recorded by Japanese Sayuda Ik, who upended reigning World 9-ball king Darryl Peach of England, 9-5.

"He [Lin] was so tough that I needed to play my best to beat him," said Alcano, actually the first of 32 players to make it to the knockout stages.

The pride of Calamba City is seeking to become the first man in 17 years to retain a world title.

Dennis Orcollo and Roberto Gomez also opened their bids on a high note, posting similar 8-4 wins over local bet Muhammad Al Hasan and South Africa's Craig Slomowy respectively.

"I didn't play my best game, but it's a good start," said Orcollo, who vows to play the winners of the first-round match between compatriot Israel Ilos and Englishman Mark Gray later last night.

Gomez, runner-up in last year's World Pool Championship back home, was slated to face reigning World 10-ball titlist Illinois star Rooming of the United States. Jim Rooming won his opening match against host's fervent Jawahari, 9-2.

Another Filipino crowner Warren Kiamco, of the Magna Billiards Stable, also cruised with an 9-2 win over Austar Qualit of Illustrious. He now faces countryman Jeff de Luna, who downed former world champion Ralf Souquet of Germany 8-5.

The biggest upset among the Filipinos was Joven Bustamante, who yielded to Sweden's Johnny Thomas, 9-5, and must win two straight, including his now match against England's Darren Appleton, to make it to the Last 32.

Antonio Gabica defeated Chris Melling of England, 9-2, while another Filipino bet Alan Guerzon lost to Malaysian Ibrahim bin Amir, 8-4.

Adamson tossers rally past Ateneo, near semis

By Patricia S. Asuncion

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY BATTLED BACK from two win-down to frustrate Ateneo, 30-32, 23-25, 25-16, 25-23, 18-16, outscatter and smash within a tale of nailing the line of two overnight semifinal seats in the Shakey's V-League Season Use The Arena in San Juan.

The Lady Falcons looked ripe for a free defeat as seven starters allow Cignal Ateneo delivered a kill that gave the Lady Eagles a 13-11 lead in the fifth set.

But Adamson quickly grabbed the upper hand, 14-11, as guests Jaja Santiago, Ilocanta and Nino Jane Lagdaliin delivered a point each and Ateneo's Thai reinforcement Kanchana Jindarat failed to win a return after a poor set play by Karla Solla.

Jindarat tied the count at 14-all but Adamson made sure to stayed streaker, at least up-till today, with a hit by Michelle Ingcalino. The Lady Falcons clinched the match as Ateneo's Nikki Tagaran' shot went out of bounds.

The Lady Eagles dropped to a column of third and fourth places at 2-3 with Lyceum, which swept its 5 matches (Adamson, 25-17, 30-25, 20-25, 25-23, 16-14, in the first game).

The Lady Pirates' victory, their second straight, prolonged the agony of the Lady Tamaraws who absorbed their seventh straight defeat in eight matches.

"We were overconfident at the beginning of the match," lamented Adamson coach Baboy Zamora. "We also had a little difficulty adjusting without Jackie Ito, who will be out of the conference because of an ACL injury."

Adamson, which was led by Ilocanta's game-high 26 points and Lagdaliin' 22, seeks the first semifinal seat against Cignal on Wednesday.

CRUCIAL Jamaah Perez slides home and scores off Batangas catcher Jennifer Pelias.

Manila Sharks feast on Pilgrims

MANILA POWERED MOTIVOLO WITH 15 HITS AND went on to post an emphatic 11-5 triumph in a duel of unbeaten teams in the baseball Philippines Invitational at the Rizal Memorial ball park yesterday.

The Sharks, who picked up their fourth straight win, scored a total of eight runs in the third and fourth innings with national team batsmen Ramon Nino Jaime clouting a home run in the third with four RBIs.

Manila starting pitcher Ramon Jaime allowed only three runs in five-hits after four and one-third innings before turning over the pitching duties to Joseph Alfonzo, who pitched a bit and was none.

LATEST TODAY

(FINAL) (MLB)
7 Lilo—Bullrigin on Hicks
10:30 a.m.—Schlitzin vs. Sapay
1 p.m.—Gonzagan vs. Santos

In the third game, Sapay notched its first win in four games by beating Mallali, 13-6, in seven innings.

Raul Ramos shined a duo-run-only inning with a pinch-hit, two-run home run off fellow national Joseph Orbina to lift Batangas to a 7-4 lead.

Hector Charlie Labrador, who usually starts for the Sharks, then shut out Antipolo in the ninth.

Batangas came from behind to upend defending champion Lilio, 9-6, in the second game of the tournament co-organized by Continental Sports Inc.

Sapay notched its first win in four games by beating Mallali, 13-6, in seven innings.

Raul Ramos shined a duo-run-only inning with a pinch-hit, two-run home run off fellow national Joseph Orbina to lift Batangas to a 7-4 lead.

Homer Silay, Contributor

Blue Eagles rookies show stuff anew

GAME 1 TODAY
(Ateneo vs. Ust—cod)
11 a.m.—ed vs. (Mapua vs. Ust—tentative)
vs. (Perpetual vs. Ust—tentative)

ATENEO ASO ITS celebrated rookies ran their second win today against Mapua while San Beda goes for at least a share of the lead in Group B as the championships of the 2nd Mid Flying V Pre-Season Intercollegiate Cup at The Arena in San Juan today.

The Blue Eagles, coming off their second win in three matches last Wednesday, collide with the Mapua Cardinals at 2 p.m. while the Lions turn up a 2-0 record against the Adamson Falcons in the 4 p.m. backgame.

The University of the Sun At Seaside duels against the four-game lift at noon. San Sebastian defends against Perpetual Help at 4 p.m.

Rookie Jeff Pinili, recruit Antonio Chua, Ryan Buenafe, Luis Carmona Gonzaga and Nino Gabaldon showed they deserve a shot at the Ateneo line-up, the Eagles roared the Altas, 93-67, for their first win in two games. Antonio S. Santos

NCA resumes 5-cock derby series at Ynares

TOPNOTCH DERBYMEN RESUMES TUNING TO THE Ynares Center in Pasig City tomorrow as the National Cockers Association resumes its 5-cock derby series with Eskwi Santos and Sonny Tiong as hosts.

Top Gang Santa Ana, Tong Pineda, Jay Flores, Eric Magpio, Ex Bisot and Jerry Sangat lead the list of game breeders who will field their aces against the battlers of NCA members, including Vice Rudy Alfonso, Ex Ynares, Rep. Igpo Ramos, Interior Secretary Ronnie Puno and Rep. Bruno.

Grand Tong Santa Ana raked the last leg on April 10

MVP disclaimer; masterpiece from a martyr

BANE EYE

Renato Trinidad

"THE PHILIPPINES' FAILURES IN TWO major international sporting meets have been strongly charged to him, to national sports czar Ricardo Dichaves who has seen the following fiascoes:

1. The national basketball team that flopped in last year's Olympic qualifying tournament in Japan overcame a disastrous debuting, the team, touched by close hearts and which conquered under the reign of the incoming Basketball Association of the Philippines, was humiliated by the San Miguel Cobras.

2. Pinoy boxers has nothing to do with the failed campaigns of the national amateurs boxing team in the Asian Olympic Qualifying tournaments in Bangkok and Kazakhstan.

Mr. Pangilinan's statement:

"Sports is not a sponsor of the Philippines Basketball Association. That was Mr. Miguel. And we say, we were sponsors to Alaska member boxing. We are not part of the Alaska. Hence, it's unfair to blame us for the boxing failure."

I hope that sees the record straight.

I don't praising MVP doesn't stop being benevolent to our heroic Filipino athletes.

* * *

MANNY Lopez, energetic president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, has also issued a statement, clearly convinced that this expense has poisoned the mind of the public with his reports and comments on the dismal state of amateur boxing in the country.

For the record, three name calls from various sectors for Lopez to step down following the disastrous showing of his boxers in Bangkok and Kazakhstan, where the Philippines failed to qualify a single bet to the Beijing Olympics.

Urgent moves to stop the bloodbaths after Southeast Asian Games.

Next, Philippine Sports Commissioner chair William "Butch" Ramirez vowed to put up a parallel boxing development program and build his own team, starting going by reforming amateur boxing from a solid grassroots level.

Next, Rep. Monico Puentevella, the BF delinquents chief, decides to go for Olympic Olympics, announced Lopez could use the job alone and thereby barred he would also assume a television and training program that could go deeper into the rural areas, hence where he would gather a bigger field of promising athletes.

* * *

Meanwhile, the public was left guessing when the thing would build.

Instead, the youthful Abay, bred, nurturing he had practically suffered from a stormy childhood, the perennial failure of his boxers, vowed a blazing statement against this supreme the soulful masterpiece slowly weaning into this repartee had shattered illusions (poor).

I therefore offer my sincerest apologies if those factual reports and comments on the state of amateur boxing in the country had caused undue harm.

I hereby can Lopez's statements (in the spirit of fairness, in his behalf reported the sports editor) with the hope and prayer for hardcore-like presidency of Jackie Abay would flourish by God grace and the returning days of success.

God bless our heroic athletes.

* * *

Pinch drunk, grumpy still bent, unrepentable and self-proclaimed boxing messiah here describe your columnist Mr. Renato Dinualdo. Sorry to tell, but this is the last time I will entertain request of other the Pinoyrene Dare boxing as is all about—hallowed never and learning never.

He is not fearless; characters is the better description because of his tenacious personal, vengeful and illogical tirades not just against the Abay, but on any personality and in the view those persons who have crossed the line personally in various international competitions.

In fact a true Filipino! He did not only remain loyally defend the Thrilla in 2007 Southeast Asian Games but he now surrenders in lavishing our praises, although he is a Manilan judging from his writings that's just Jean Manuel Marquez in favor of Manny Pacquiao, a true Filipino sporting hero. He opted to remain silent and played blind when Abay won 2 gold and 1 silver medals in the 2004 Olympics in Athens. An unprecedented feat by any National Sports Association since the 1964 Hondorica debut.

In a letter to executive that Mr. Dinualdo sent stating has the alleged "failures" of Philippine sports, disregarding the fact that there are issues and concerns in sports "simply put, we can't win 'em all."

The same situation it is one can't believe in springboard to success. How in Abay, are fight to the best of our abilities, learn from our mistakes, and we succeed and lose in one. We are not pessimists, we always look for the bright side of things, very much unlike Mr. Dinualdo who only sees shortcomings and personal interest in his writings.

He has also carelessly insinuated, misfigured and besmirched a lot of people in his tirades, including basketball, the honorary of the Philippine Olympic Committee, etc. I consider what he spreads is. I have reasons to believe that he bereft of a consistency complex, believing that his words are the straight cure for all the life threatening Philippine sports.

But that's further from the truth! For one, Mr. Dinualdo and his fine, diligence and criminal faculties are all figure going, going, gone." They are the "greatest pretenders" in 80 sports.

The youth drunk Mr. Dinualdo throws us chaos and he loves to close his eyes to reality and problems to allow blind to the achievements of Abay!

I have stayed silent for quite a time and already apologized to the nation for the failures of our national athletes during the Asian Olympic qualifiers in Bangkok and Astana, respectively. I told us in my belief that Mr. Dinualdo possessed no touch of decency and delusion that is very alarming and disturbing.

Recently, in his column Shoot Eye last April 16, he was hardcore that old wives of not just hitting boxing but basketball as well. Mr. Dinualdo in the Shoot Eye/ELITE chair Manny V. Pangilinan in his columns, not knowing full well that MVP is very sincere in helping Philippine sports.

My advice to Mr. Dinualdo is age gracefully and not the fight by creating friends and not enemies.

Of course, it's worth mentioning that he has defended the skills and capabilities of Beijing Olympics Henry Tabanes, instead of encouraging our nationals to bounce back, he decided to rub salt in injury by blaming the failure of Tabanes, Ramon Rivas, Leopoldo Constantin, and others who have served our country very well. Bear I ask, is he truly a Filipino or someone pretending to be one with his unpatriotic views?

Very truly yours,

Manuel T. Lopez
President, Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap)

216 dispute Mercedes golf title

THE 2008 MERCEDES TROPHY NATIONAL FINAL exhibits today with 216 players, 172 of them Mercedes-Benz car owners, vying for top honors at the Elks Filinvest Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

Slated for the 18-hole tournament are the best 108 Mercedes-Benz owners who competed in the SM Show Classic and the Sta. Elena Cup, said chair Greg Ng and president Felix Angat event organizer CEO Motors.

Additional Cohort of Daimler Southeast Asia, said the prize at the field is "a sign of success" of the tourney, which dates three Mercedes-Benz C-Class C 180s, two Classic E 200 saloons and a P700,000 loan Richards watch from Chronos.

SPORTS WATCH

Last Rambulan elims gets going

THE LAST SIX OF 32 participants in the PC2.5-million-added Rambulan 9-Dark Derby plunges into action today in the Southern metro-raced featuring some 60 matches. The SJC management is anticipating essentially of 1,000 participants to the nationwide event which begins on February through a series of eliminations, said pit manager Renato Silio. So far, 20 participants lead the pack with 5-0 slate each. Leaders with 2, 3-0, David Sit, poetry will race the 4-cock finals on April 26. Finals with 4, 4-1s and 3 will start outdoor on April 29 and 30.

DR Bowl derby at Makati today

SEVEN BIG GUNS join the trap today in the DR Bowl 5-Cock Derby featuring some 30 fights at the Makati Cockers Heat Little Bowl of Batangas DR Boulevard pegged the entry fee of P50,000 and said the "open guaranteed prize" format will be adopted. Among those battling their aces are Tony Pangan, Arman Gaerlan, Pol Esmeralda, Rizzy Kalingkat, SJC group and Pinky Reyes.

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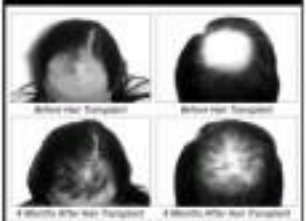

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SPORTS

Spurs eclipse Suns; Jazz ground Rockets

SAN ANTONIO—TIM DUNCAN AND Manu Ginobili produced dramatic shots to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 117–115 double-overtime victory over the Phoenix Suns in their NBA playoff game on Saturday.

Duncan sank his first three-pointer of the season to force a second overtime and Ginobili delivered the game-winner on a layup with 1.6 seconds remaining in the game at San Antonio.

"I had all the time in the world to dive it up. I just threw it up there and hoped for the best," Duncan told reporters of his clutch shot with three seconds to go in the first overtime.

"It was such a hard fought battle in a game that could have gone either way so easily," added Duncan, who had 40 points and 15 rebounds. "It seemed like a finals game."

In other playoff games, the New Orleans Hornets beat the Dallas Mavericks 104–92 with Chris Paul scoring 19 points.

The Cleveland Cavaliers, meanwhile, beat the Washington Wizards 93.86 behind LeBron James's 32 points and the Utah Jazz defeated the Houston Rockets 93-82.

At San Antonio, Duncan brought the Spurs back from a 104–99 deficit with a minute to play in the first overtime by scoring the period's final five points.

Ginobili took over in the second extra period, providing eight of the Spurs' 13 points in the period including the winning shot. He ended with 24 points, while Tony Parker scored 26.

Amare Stoudemire scored 32 points and Steve Nash contributed 25 points and 13 assists for the Suns.

Game two of the best-of-seven series is on Tuesday in San Antonio.

In Houston, the Jazz dominated the offensive boards in the first half and dug in defensively to hold off a second-half Rockets comeback in a win that took away Houston's home-court advantage in the best-of-seven series.

Andrei Kirilenko led Utah with 21 points while Carlos Boozer scored 18 and grabbed 16 rebounds, including seven in the first quarter when the Jazz had seven offensive rebounds in the Rockets' net. Reuters

CLEVELAND Cavaliers star LeBron James puts up a shot past the defense of the Washington Wizards' Brendan Haywood. REUTERS

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Calzaghe decisions Hopkins in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS—JOE CALZAGHE RE-cantered unbeaten with a split decision victory against Bernard Hopkins, ceremoniously rallying in the final rounds against his crafty 43-year-old opponent to end his long-anticipated US debut with a flourish.

Hopkins (49-5-2) put on a master class in the veteran's skills of ring sport as the Thomas & Mack Center, historic ring down Calzaghe (45-0) with a stodgy style based on his defensive prowess, frustrating Calzaghe's attempts to trade blows.

But after floundering against Hopkins' defense through the early rounds, Calzaghe never stopped working, and wearing down his older opponent, eventually gaining control in the final rounds of their light heavyweight non-title bout.

Judge Ted Grossweiler scored it 115-112 for Calzaghe, and Chuck Giampa favored Calzaghe 116-111. Judge Adelaide Byrd gave it 114-113 to Hopkins, as did many reporters at ringside...including The Associated Press, which also favored Hopkins 114-113 despite Calzaghe's dominance in the final few rounds. AP

B'vista, Fetalvero rule Global Run

TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN EDUARDO BUENAVISTA AND MERcedita Fetalvero remained the country's premiere 10K runners after dominating yesterday's 4th Barclaris Global City Fun Run at the Barclaris Global City in Taguig.

Buenavista eked up his opponents in the early part of the race before adding the throw to win in 31 minutes and 36 seconds.

Fetalvero was virtually unchallenged as well as she dusted rain, winning in 40:50.

Alfey Quimay was second in the men's race in 31:50 followed by Jessie Sias, who clocked 32:00. Sayed Kitam and and Arnie Whitehouse followed Ardoven home in 38:06 and 40:24.

Buenavista and Fetalvero each won P6,000 and a pair of shoes. The runners-up and third placers in both division earned P5,000 and P4,000, respectively.

A total of 1,500 runners joined the race organized by Hari Rotinda Development Corp. in partnership with JPF General Merchandising, Inc.

FETALVERO

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Gov't allots P2B for post-harvest facilities

Move to curb losses in rice, corn production

By Doris C. Dumlao

TRADE SECRETARY PETER FAVILA IS SET TO RELEASE P2 BILLION out of the National Development Corp.'s coffers to boost farmers' post-harvest facilities and boost local production amid a global food price scare.

Favila told reporters at the sidelines of an Asia United Bank anniversary cocktail Friday night that the government was running efforts to cope with the upturnal in global commodity prices.

"The President has just given an instruction to plow P2 billion for post-harvest facilities. The farmers cannot dictate," Favila said.

"I already have the P2 billion, as the NDC is allowed by its charter to float bonds. The remaining question is which specific (rates) satisfy with me the money," he said.

The post-harvest facilities were meant to reduce huge losses in rice and corn production because of lack of buyers.

Malacañang has estimated that some 15 percent of the country's palay harvest was wasted due to post-harvest losses. These losses happen during harvesting, piling, threshing, drying, storage and milling. The biggest loss of 8-10 percent occurs during the drying process.

Under the agricultural modernization program, the NDC has already allotted P2 billion to provide farmers with dryers and other post-harvest facilities.

The allocation includes the P1 billion

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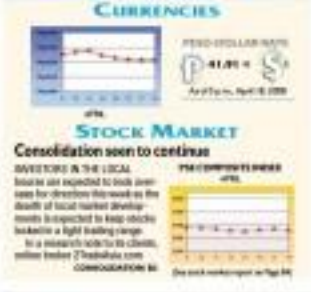

Consolidation seen to continue

Previous page

said that players in the Philippine stock exchange were expected to watch closely this week whether foreign funds would start buying/load stocks again before jumping in.

"Equities players will continue to monitor economic improvement—specifically for net foreign buying...and check if market gauges have already factored in downside risks," the stockbroker said.

The firm also said that investors might shift its methods of evaluating local stocks other than the traditional form of comparing a company's share price to its earnings potential.

2Trade Asia said that valuations "could shift toward price to book value discussion" rather than price-earnings ratio. On the whole, however, the broker expects this week to closely mirror last week's performance when the PSEi shed 25 points to end the week at 2,915.67, down 0.86 percent. Jazmin L. Lucas

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(Mis)targeting the poor

NO FREE LUNCH
Cielito F. Habito

IT SHOULD SURPRISE NO ONE that the National Food Authority (NFA) is seriously considering raising the price of its subsidized rice from the current P18.25 a kilo.

With its buying support price for palay raised to P17 a kilo recently, the equivalent cost of the resulting milled rice a P34 a kilo (based on the rule of thumb: 2:1 milled rice to palay price ratio), or a loss of at least P11.50 a kilo sold. On the average, then, if NFA sells as much rice this year as it did last year (reportedly 1.8 million tons, equivalent to 33.3 million bags), the agency would incur a loss of P44 billion to be shouldered by all of us taxpayers. The actual loss is likely to be even higher, given that the most recent quoted world prices for rice are already in the range of $875 (or P 37,188) a ton.

Charity price

Now that the P18.25-a-kilo rice selling price was set when the NFA was buying palay from farmers at P11 a kilo (or P22 a kilo of rice) and importing rice at around $300 a ton (P12,393 a ton). While buying about P4 a kilo of domestic rice premised at the time on the benefit of the farmers with profits on imported rice, that not to mix with current skyrocketing world rice prices. Clearly P18.25 a kilo is unsustainable, and under current circumstances, is nothing short of a charity price that government imposes on those to eat only rice for a meal. Charity, in the general sense, is the noble thing to do, and is truly deserving of the support among Filipinos. Hence the move to pull out the P18.25-a-kilo NFA rice from regular markets, to be targeted exclusively to the truly poor. But the question now is how to target the poor to make the price of rice to more realistic levels, on the blood the national coffers in the point of exercising another fiscal crisis.

This raises a critical question: How do we target the sale of the highly subsidized rice to ensure that it reaches only the truly poor, and as many of them as possible?

Targeting schemes

During the Ramos administration, targeting was done by focusing geographically on the 20 percent or so provinces, defined as the provinces with the highest percentage incidences of poverty. It was soon realized, however, that only 11 percent of all poor Filipinos were in these provinces; many of which were in other areas. Thus, even if all the poor in these provinces were lifted out of poverty, it would make a small dent on national poverty levels. The targeting scheme was thus refined to focus on the fish and fish dish: municipalities, to the premise that the poorest families in the poor municipalities are poor, and even the richest (municipalities have many poor dwellers.

The Estrada administration took a different approach: government sought to direct assistance to the 3.85 million families in each province and city, with the local government officials to identify them. With limited data on which to base the selection, it took two years for the NSO to finally come up with their lists by then, a new administration had taken over.

Arroyo targeting

The Arroyo administration took yet another approach to targeting, as exemplified in its Food-for-School and Tindahan Natin Programs (TNP and TNP respectively). Government has devised a food insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping System (FIVIMS) that identifies very, very vulnerable (VVV), very vulnerable (VV) and vulnerable (V) LGUs. All 17 regions and provinces in Metro Manila are included as target areas regardless of relative vulnerability level, for clearly political reasons. For FSP all VVV municipalities are also automatically included, along with the poorest municipalities in VV and V provinces. For TNP, the 3.85 million families were identified in a rapid poverty mapping done by DSWD, focused on prevalence of malnutrition and lack of electricity.

Dismal record

Unfortunately, our track record on targeting the poor has been disappointing. Studies by Dr. Ramon Mercenado and by Dr. Celia Reyes of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) have measured leakage rates (percentage of non-poor beneficiaries) and undercoverage rates (percentage of the poor who do not benefit) of the above targeting mechanisms. Results show that more than half of the recipients of the targeted assistance are actually non-poor, with leakage rates of 62 percent for FSP and 68 percent for TNP. Undercoverage rates are estimated at 80 percent, i.e. only one-fifth of total target beneficiaries are assisted by the program.

Interestingly, Metro Manila accounts for the bulk (71 percent) of the leakages in FSP. Similarly, the leakage rate for TNP is estimated at 63 to 69 percent if Metro Manila stores are not covered. Substantial leakages in targeted assistance to the poor government has been paying for buying political support from the more visible and more vocal constituencies in Metro Manila through their indiscriminate inclusion in targeted assistance programs. Targeting P18.25-a-kilo rice will probably be no different.

Comments are welcome at abahio@primus.edu

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Gov't allots P2B ...

From page B1

wards of new dryers for the National Food Authority (NFA), and 1,000 flatbed dryers for the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Bureau of Post-harvest Research and Extension (BPRE).

Asked whether it was an option for the government or not Philippine Trade and Investment Center (PTIC) in importing more rice abroad, Fariñas said the government's thrust was really to increase the private sector importation by cutting tariffs.

"We would do it (say PTIC) as well but we don't see it as such. We'll have to study our options carefully," Fariñas said. The trade chief also reiterated that he does trade liberalization would be the way to go to counter the adverse impact of the upward in commodity prices.

"I guess now people will have a better appreciation why we need FTAs (free trade agreements). As these situations, the ones who have an existing agreements will be ahead in terms of access in those markets," Fariñas said.

"So it is a big, because of our strong relations with our trading partners. The US, for instance, is willing to help us out, provide the rice but of course the US goes by the market price," he said.

Fariñas lamented that the country could not even move forward the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa), which calls for zero tariffs on almost all industrial products traded by both countries within 10 years upon effectivity of the trade deal.

"You have countries in the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), for instance, that have FTAs with the US and all over. But it doesn't mean to say we are hopeless. Because of our long-standing relations, we can request for support here and there and somehow they listen," Fariñas said.

Asked about comments that government rice subsidies through the NFA were reducing the incentive for the private sector to import rice, Fariñas said the subsidies were specifically targeted at the poorest of the poor.

"We're not subsidizing the market in general. The poorest of the poor, they are the ones who need the support," he said.

Meanwhile, Fariñas said the government was strengthening coordination among local government units so that those with excess production could help those which incur shortfalls.

The projected crisis now feed, he said, were not likely to happen in the Philippines.

"We Filipinos, by culture, we don't fight on food. When we have visitors, we give everything to them," he said. The incumbent can feed somebody, he said, would help boost the country's aim to attain national food security.

"In the whole world, the global rice requirement is 430 billion metric tons and the inventory of the whole world and even the production capacity will not reach that. So we can't rely on imports. We have to take care of ourselves," he said.

"I hope big businesses will help the farmers," he added.

Fariñas expressed confidence that the country would handle this commodity crisis as it always had in the past. "We're probably the country that has weathered the most storms of crisis," he said.

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Gov't boosts drive vs counterfeiting

Private sector support tapped

By Roland N. Dantioge

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COALITION called for private-sector support in the campaign against counterfeiting as the country strives to be taken out of the United States' list of countries and territories "that deny adequate and effective protection for IP rights."

IP Philippines director general Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr. said in an interview that a yearly review being conducted by the US Trade Representative's Office ordered to each list was ongoing and that results were expected within the next few weeks.

"We have an overall positive impression about this year's Special 301 Report," Cristobal said. "We are optimistic that if the Philippines is not taken out of the list, at least its rating would not worsen."

The US Trade Act of 1974—amended through subsequent laws passed in 1988 and 1994—mandates the USTR to identify every year the "countries that deny adequate and effective protection for IPR or deny fair and equitable market access" for

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ATN Holdings' partners sign first manganese deal

By Dexter L. Lucas

THE JOINT-VENTURE PARTNERS of Nasdaq-listed ATN Holdings Inc. to a Nueva Ecija-based mining venture recently sealed their first purchase agreement for manganese ore.

According to a statement released by the group, Mindoro Mining Corp. and Silvia Minder Consolidated Mines have signed the deal for the sale of 10,000 metric tons of manganese ore.

"The first pick-up batch, which is currently being loaded, will consist of manganese ore extracted from Nico Minerals, Nueva Ecija, under the ore extraction and valorization enhancement pilot project of Nico's Manlayo candidates in Jalaur mercury with Mindoro and ATN Holdings," the statement said.

The groups declined to disclose the pricing terms of the transaction due to confidentiality agreements with the buyers.

Sale involves 10,000 MT of ore

The statement said, however, that the partners were also "finalizing terms with several other overseas buyers who have offered to purchase a steady monthly volume of manganese ores."

"In fact, bid offers have been received for volume orders from a firm with a steel-manufacturing plant in China," the group said.

The announcements come a few weeks after ATN Holdings' partners said that they have made "significant progress" in the manganese ore retrieval and "reparation ore harassment project" at their Nueva Ecija open pit mine.

Mindoro Mining officials have said that they expected to extract as much as 100,000 metric tons of manganese ore from a five-hectare pilot site in Nueva Ecija.

The company said that studies conducted over the total area of operations have established a projected manganese mineralization belt with an encouraging geological reserve of up to 3 million metric tons of high-grade deposits.

In the statement, the companies said that the "pick-up basis pricing" of selling the manganese ore was rendered more "competitive and stable" by accepting bids from prospective buyers.

"The intended purchase agreement provides for an escalating price level to allow adjustments corresponding to increasing global market prices of manganese or higher bid offers by other buyers," the statement said.

Manganese is a key ingredient to metal and steel production. The increase in metal prices in the global market has been spurred by, among others, China's increasing demand.

Groups dispute nickel mining rights

PUBLICLY LISTED CHRISTIAN FILIPINO-owned Benguet Corp. Inc. last week defended its right to a nickel mining site in Palawan amid questions raised by a rival firm which claims to own the right to the same site.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Benguet Dumaguete said that its subsidiary, Climatech Mines and Development Resources Group, obtained the consent of indigenous people for the mining operations—as required by law—through a deed of assignment from Olympic Mines and Development Corp. which, in turn, has its operating agreement with the Platinum Group Metals Corp.

"[Platinum Group] entered into a memorandum of agreement with [Olympic Mines] whereby [Olympic] is to operate in the latter's concession," the company said.

"Thus, with the deed of assignment, all title and rights of [Olympic] over the [mining permit] were transferred to Climatech," Oriental added.

A statement from the company's critics pointed out, however, that the memorandum of agreement between

SEE PAGE B8

Petron may be forced to import ethanol supply

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF the San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc. ethanol plant facing delay, Petron Corp. may be forced to import its ethanol supply to be able to comply with the Biofuels Act of 2006's mandated 5 percent blend by next year.

Petron chair Nilanjo Aznarain said the oil firm might no longer be able to wait for the San Carlos Bio-Energy ethanol processing plant to be completed and has thus sought earlier than mandated June 8 to February 2009.

Possible ethanol sources included Brazil, India and Thailand, he said, but the possibility of importation was still being thoroughly studied.

The oil firm would be doing a trial importation of two containers worth of ethanol just to test the waters, he said.

"We have to determine our next big step when it comes to complying with the mandated ethanol blend. We may have to import just to comply with the law," he said.

"But this is still being studied. We believe that ethanol should be sourced locally because the law will not make sense if we just import. However, the mandate will take effect on February 2009, and the construction of San Carlos is delayed," he added.

Under the biofuels law, gasoline should have at least a 5-percent ethanol blend within two years of the law's effectivity. The mandated blend will rise to no less 10 percent after four years.

In preparation for this, Petron had signed a memorandum of understanding with San Carlos Bio-Energy for its ethanol supply.

San Carlos Bio-Energy will be pairing up an integrated facility that will have a cane milling plant with a throughput capacity of 1,500 tons a day of sugarcane daily.

It will also have a co-generation power plant that will produce about 9 megawatts (MW) of electricity, of which 4 MW will be sold to the grid.

The facility will also locate a distillery plant that can generate 180,000 liters of anhydrous ethanol a day.

Negros plant construction faces delay

Consortium starts raising funds for ₱15-B Tarlac-La Union expressway

By Dustin L. Lucas

THE CONSORTIUM THAT RECently won the right to build an expressway aimed at cutting travel time between Baguio City and Metro Manila has started tackling financial partners who will help shoulder the cost of the P15-billion project.

At the same time, the president of the 18-member Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (PIDC) said the company is expecting the process of shortlisting its capital partners to end by October in the project gets underway.

"Our first expenditure will be 150m million so we need to raise another P200 million for our members," said PIDC chair Rogelio Monga, explaining that the firm already has a paid-up capital of P200 million.

He told reporters that actual work on the project might start as soon as next month when the company expects to secure all the approvals from government regulators.

The government recently awarded the right to build and operate the proposed 84-kilometer Tarlac-La Union Toll Expressway (TLATEx) to PIDC, which counts as its members H. M. Gonzalez Inc., First Balfour Construction, EEI Corp., C. M. Pancho Construction, R. T. Hilcruz Construction, JV Angeles Construction, D. M. Wenceslao Construction, New Kumtam Construction, and Richford Construction.

The two-lane TLATEx is expected to be completed up to Urdaneta, Pangasinan, by mid-2010, while completion with full-toll-way operations will be by January 2013. The plan calls for the addition of one more lane to ease the traffic volume reaches 20,000 a day.

With the completion of the TLATEx, travel to Baguio City will be cut to 3.1 hours compared to the present average of five to six hours. The government hopes that the expressway will help promote tourism as well as lower the cost of time and fishery products coming from the northern region.

During the briefing for prospective lenders last Friday, BDO Capital and Investment Corp. president Ed Francisco outlined the project's financial needs, saying that P5.9 billion of the project cost will be shouldered by the national government, leaving a requirement of P12.23 billion.

Preliminary plans call for P3.66 billion of this amount to come from equity that will be raised by the consortium members, while P8.56 billion will come from commercial borrowings.

Meanwhile, DMCI Holdings president Isidro Consunji said that his company would fund the capital call by selling at least P1.5 billion worth of "idle assets" as soon as next month.

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Accounting is a basic but necessary survival tool for any businessperson. Use it to record, classify and summarize business transactions, importantly, understand what the numbers mean!

2 Managerial Accounting: Empower Your Decision-Making
April 29 to 30 (8:30AM – 1:00PM)
You see financial statements. Are they just a jumble of numbers to you? Let these numbers work for you! Learn analytical tools to turn numbers into valuable information that will enable you to make operational decisions to the bottom-line.

3 Human Resource Management for SMEs: Getting the HR That You Need
May 6 (8:30AM – 1:00PM)
People are your most valuable and important resources. Learn how to understand how your HR systems and more a trouble-free HR. Check what you need to have in your HR organization to reduce headaches and promote harmony.

4 Preparing a Business Plan: Create a Road Map for a Successful Business
May 6 to 7 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
You must begin somewhere and it starts with a plan. Learn the disciplined approach in developing a proper business plan. Business Readers agree: the key to business success is an effective business plan.

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR PEOPLE

5 Workforce Planning: Balancing Your People and Your Needs
May 7 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
Requirements for quality and quantity of personnel vary with each stage of the business cycle. Learn how to forecast the demand and supply of your workforce. Create strategies to have them available in your organization when you need them.

6 Managing Change: A Constant Need for Business Growth
May 13 to 14 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
"The only thing constant is change." Manage change and minimize resistance as your business grows. Know how to assess your organization's readiness for change, and how to facilitate and communicate these transformations to the stakeholders.

7 Performance Planning: Measure What Really Matters
May 20 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
It has the potential to align your people in synch with business performance. Set up your people for success by articulating what you expect from them, monitoring their performances, providing feedback and rewarding their contributions to overall business performance.

MANAGING THE FAMILY BUSINESS

8 Family Team-Building: Building-up a Winning Team
May 20 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
Behind every strong business is a strong family! It makes good business sense to invest in people, who in turn look after the most important people of all! YOUR FAMILY! Learn how to communicate better with your family, skirmish a productive and high-performance winning team.

9 The Family Constitution: The Answer to Family Feuds
June 3 (9:00AM – 5:00PM)
Why is working with family so tough? Interpersonal conflict? Sibling rivalry? Envious? Is there a way out of this mess? Learn how to craft a family constitution to help the family clarify the roles, rules and policies to foster family harmony and to ensure business continuity.

10 Strategic Planning & Professionalizing the Business: Setting Out the Family from the Business
June 4 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
Family businesses need strategies to remain competitive and grow the business. Learn strategic management and planning. Arrive at agreed strategies for continued growth and competitiveness. Learn how professionalism increases the success of the business. Fine-tuning its strategies to meet objectives and tackle its risks.

11 Succession Planning: The Final Test of Greatness
June 5 (8:30AM – 5:00PM)
Statistics show that many family businesses eventually fall because of succession problems. Founder: "My successor will have to get Success!" "When will you have full authority?" Other siblings: "Dad will not allow me!" Every family member has a stake in the success of transition. Learn how family can come together to help the founder pass his "Final Test of Greatness!"

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DTI, business eye 'Garments City' in Clark

Move aimed at luring Chinese companies relocating overseas

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FAYOLA

THE GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL GARMENT manufacturers are looking at the possibility of putting up a so-called Garments City at the Clark free port zone as the Philippines gears up to lure companies in China that are considering relocating overseas.

In an interview, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said he had brought up the concept of a garments zone in Clark during a meeting with the Confederation of Taiwanese Exporters of the Philippines (Cetaip) held in Hong Kong last March.

Currently, garment factories are spread across Cebu, Cavite, Batangas and Pampanga.

"The domestic industry would benefit from the linkages that such a village-like set up would give rise to," Favila said.

Initially, players have described the Garments City as similar to the Shoppe-Clute City in China, which was designed to simplify and make more efficient the operations of garments and textile businesses.

Favila said tourism to the Garments City would continue to enjoy incentives as exporters, and these would also be the obvious advantage of access to the Subic bay port through the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, which would cut down the process of shipping to North America.

"The best testimonial to the advantages of locating in the Philippines, particularly in Clark, is the experience of Hong Kong-based Liam Thai Holding," Favila said.

"To realize the Garments City concept, Congep has to do its part of securing commitments on additional investments or new locators, especially those coming from Mainland China," he added.

Clark-based Liam Thai Philippines, which makes Polo Ralph Lauren apparel, is represented in the Congep board of directors.

"I told Congep officials of my desire to review the garments and textiles industry especially with the new opportunities that certain developments in China are giving rise to," Favila said.

He was referring to recently enacted Chinese laws that are expected to result in higher costs for garment firms.

Favila said the Department of Trade and Industry was finalizing an order that would establish a task under the Board of Investments that would dedicated to the needs of the garments industry.

He said the move was partly in response to Congep's request for a committee similar to the Garments and Textiles Exports Board, which was phased out along with the world trade quota system that ended in 2005.

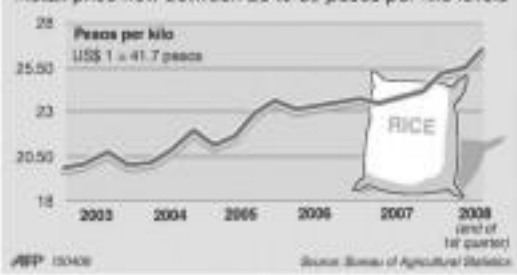
For the industry's part, Congep chairman George T. Ty said the group's seven biggest members alone have committed to infuse additional investments of some $150 million in the country.

"The only condition is that this government must formal negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United States," Ty said.

"The Philippines is on a long wait list of US FTA partners and we need to jump-start this now," he said. "A 2008 kick off means investors can plan two to three years of expansion."

Philippines rice price

Retail price now between 28 to 30 pesos per kilo levels



Metrobank ties up with Saudi bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST bank, Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., has tied up with Banque Al Aqeela's Secured Commercial Bank (SCB) for a remittance business.

The two banks entered into a remittance service agreement whereby Metrobank would serve as the fulfillment partner of SCB for Philippine-bound transactions.

Money sent home by overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia would be distributed by Metrobank to their respective beneficiaries in the Philippines under an "SCB-Quickpay" program. This program says that following receipt of payment, Credit-to-Metrobank accounts, cash pick-up transactions at Metrobank branches, or door-to-door cash delivery.

"This partnership with SCB will strengthen Metrobank's presence in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia.

SCB is a major player in the area and with this tie-up, we are confident we can increase our presence in the region," said Metrobank executive vice president and international officer group head Carmelita Sycoquia.

SCB is the largest bank in terms of capital in the Middle East, with paid-up capital of $1.8 billion. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are among the Philippines' major sources of remittances, along with the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Metrobank has a global network of international branches, offices, and subsidiaries in the Asia Pacific (Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Shanghai), the Americas (New York, Hawaii, New Jersey, Chicago and the Bahamas) and Europe (London, Rome, Milan, Bologna, Madrid, Barcelona and Paris).

ROUNDUP

iRemit's earnings up

PUBLICLY LISTED REMIT INC. POSTED A 616 percent jump in its earnings for last year on the back of strong dollar remittances from expatriate Filipinos working overseas.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), iRemit said its 2007 net income rose by 167 percent to P113.29 million from P42.5 million a year ago.

The company's delivery fees—which make up the bulk of its revenues—rose by 58 percent from P223 million in 2006 to P367 million at the end of last year due to the increase in the number of transactions at its remittance centers overseas.

iRemit president and CEO Rene Jacinto said remittance transactions last year reached 1.66 million up by 35 percent from only 1.23 million in 2006.

The company said its foreign exchange gains due to strong peso grew by 51 percent from P121 million in 2006 to P184 million last year.

The total volume of foreign exchange handled in 2007 amounted to $206 million. Rincon L. Espino

Morph Labs capital hike OKd

CEBU–BASED IT firm Morph Labs said the Cebu office of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) had approved its application for an increase in author ized capital or preparation for its initial public offering in the middle of the year.

The SEC unit approved an increase in Morph Labs' authorized capital from P10 million divided into 100,000 shares at a par value of P100.00 per share to P500 million, divided into 5,000,000,000 shares at a par value of P1.00 per share.

"The increase was funded by converting previous advances made by shareholders in favor of the company," the company said in a statement.

The firm aims to raise P600 million from the IPO at an offer price of P4.80 to P5.80. Jesse T. Obligacion

New UITF product

PHOENICIAN BANK, its Summit Group's financial services arm, recently launched its new Unit Investment Trust Fund (UITF) product via the PB Balanced Fund.

The offering ranks Hibalk's Trust & Investment Group's (TIG) second year of operations and complements the two existing fixed income UITFs managed by Hibalk.

Its Hibalk Blue Peso Fixed Income Fund and Hibalk Green Dollar Fixed Income Fund have consistently ranked in the top ten BCH ranking of medium-term fund (MTF) as the 2007 and earned figures from the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) show.

The new BB Balanced Fund is a UITF that can be invested in both fixed-income securities and in equities of up to a maximum 40 percent of the fund.

Cebu Pac taps Accenture solutions

CEBU PACIFIC SAID IT COULD STILL grow its revenue and passenger volume despite soaring jet fuel costs.

The budget airline intends to do this through cost and revenue management measures supported by technology solutions from Accenture.

"We flew 5.3 million passengers last year and this year, we may exceed 7 million passengers. Last year we made P13 billion in revenue and this year we are going for P19 billion. The first three months have been good so we are on track," airline president and CEO Lance Gokongwei told reporters in a briefing.

"But there will be headwinds," he warned. "Fine, jet fuel prices are already 60 percent higher in the first quarter of this year compared with the first quarter of last year. The second is recession, which some say is already happening in the US."

Cebu Pacific will raise local airline ticket prices by P56 to P180 starting April 16 after getting a provisional approval from the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB). Rival Philippine Airlines (PAL) were ahead on March 28 with a P105 increase for domestic routes after a similar approval due to rising oil prices.

Gokongwei said the airline was already subsidizing higher jet fuel prices through fuel hedging and imposing higher surcharges in domestic and regional routes. Jesse T. Obligacion

$200-M loan to AES OKd

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK said it had released a $200-million loan to support the private conversion of state-owned Masinloc coal-fired power plant.

"ADB's involvement acts as a catalyst for the privatization of the plant, which will lessen the Philippines' national debt burden," said ADB senior investment specialist Bonnie Buensuceso.

The US-based AES Corp. won the bidding for the 600 megawatt (MW) Masinloc plant with an offer of $930 million. The cost to buy, rehabilitate, and operate the plant is being financed through equity investments and shareholders' loans of $400 million from US-based AES Corp. and $30 million from the International Financing Corp.

The $200-million ADB loan accounted for 32 percent of the debt contracted by the winning bidder. The balance will be provided by the IFC and four commercial banks.

AES had paid $10 percent of the purchase price to the government. It will invest $47 million more in the plant's rehabilitation, which will improve its operating efficiency and bring its environmental, health and safety performance up to global standards.

"This will save coal and reduce carbon dioxide and other emissions," Buensuceso said. "It will also diversify the electricity generation market in the Philippines, thereby promoting competition and helping reduce power rates in the long run."

Masinloc is the eighth and largest power plant in its privatized out of a total of 31 plants placed on the auction block. Doris C. Dumlao

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of CEBU PROPERTY VENTURES & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION will be held at Ballroom 1 of the City Sports Club Cebu, Cebu City on TUESDAY, 29 APRIL 2008 at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon with the following:

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
   4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of 18 March 2008 shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from 19 to 27 March 2008, inclusive.

Makati City, 04 March 2008.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RENATO D. MARZAN
Corporate Secretary

Gov't boosts drive vs counterfeiting

From page B1

persons that rely on IP protection.

The USTR created a "priority watch list" and a "watch list" that indicate the relative priority of an issue related to IPR protection in subject countries.

The Philippines was listed with 21 other countries in the 2007 Special 301 Report watch list, which named mostly developing countries but also developed markets like Canada, Italy and Taiwan.

The country has been on the watch list for two years after it was moved from the priority watch list following favorable results of an "out-of-cycle review" done in late 2005. The country had been on the PWL since 2001.

In a statement, Crisolod said a Public-Private Partnership Council for Intellectual Property Rights (PSCIPR) has been institutionalized in an effort to firm up multisectoral cooperation.

"We emphasize the important role that the private sector plays in the war against piracy," he said. "In fact, curtailing piracy private partnerships is one of the seven strategic components in action plan of the National Committee on IPR."

"The regular meetings of the council provide a venue for sharing information, discussions on operational matters, policy debate and joint projects for public information and education," he added.

Various organizations in the private sector—including the motion-picture, electronics, Internet, cable, video, motion picture, and creative industries—are represented on the PSCIPR, which serves as a forum where related concerns and issues on IPR are tackled.

IP Philippines also showed that in 2006 alone, some P3 billion worth of counterfeit goods were seized during enforcement operations of the Optical Media Board, Bureau of Customs, Philippine National Police, and National Bureau of Investigation.

In 2007, there were 1,172 IPR cases for disposition filed with the Department of Justice's Task Force on Intellectual Property Piracy.

Of those cases, 374 were acted on, leaving 598 cases still pending.

In January 2008, 33 more cases were filed and 75 cases were disposed, which brought the number of pending cases to 556.

BSP needs to continue defending the peso, says Singson

By Doris C. Dumlao

FORMER BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas Governor Gabriel Singson says the need for the Philippine-owned bank to continue defending the peso—whether by raising interest rates, infusing US dollars into the market or a combination of both—to prevent runaway inflation, especially now that food and fuel prices are rising globally.

Singson, the BSP chief during the Ramos administration and when the country was battered by the Asian currency turmoil and a rice crisis, said establishing the safeguard rate was imperative as the country's inflation rate would likely overshoot the government's target of 5 percent for this year.

"If the exchange rate goes up too much...we're importing rice, importing oil...other will hap-

pen to our inflation?" Singson said in an interview at the sidelines of Asia United Bank's 10th year anniversary Friday night.

The peso, Asia's best performing currency in 2007, has now fallen back to nearly 42-$1 after touching an eight-year high of 40.25 in late-February.

"All I can say is that 2007 was a very good year and I'm afraid 2008 will be different. But I'm sure the BSP knows how to handle this. I have confidence in Governor [Amando] Tetangco and the staff. We've gone through it before," he said.

Like Singson, Tetangco is a veteran central banker who was managing director at the BSP at the time that the former was head of the monetary institution.

The BSP, which had been a heavy buyer of dollars from the Philippine Dealing System over the last two years, was seen intervening in defense of the peso last week in early Wednesday, for instance, the central bank was spotted unloading as much as $300 million to stem the peso's depreciation against the US dollar.

When Singson was BSP chief, the country was also hit by a rice shortage that pushed up the inflation rate to 21 percent. At that time, he said the Department of Agriculture did not import rice in order to support local producers.

He said the problem was solved very quickly as the government agreed to purchase more rice abroad.

"But [then 10-cent dips] also in the world market is high plus exchange rate is going up," Singson said.

As such, he said it would be important to stabilize the exchange rate in order to temper the rise in import costs.

Finance department seeks seat in BOI board

Granting of perks affects gov't fiscal program

By Michelle V. Rerea

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE wants to be represented in the Board of Investments, which now has seven board members.

The Finance representative to the BOI board would be the secretary or one of the undersecretaries.

"The DOF's participation in the board may enable it to put forward its opinions on project applications and investment concerns so the done would impact on the fiscal prospects of the national government," the department said in a written explanation of its request to be taken as part of the BOI board.

Currently, the BOI board is composed of the Trade and Industry Secretary, three trade undersecretaries and three private-sector representatives.

The DOF said it has to have a representative in the board because the BOI's decision in granting fiscal incentives to certain businesses affect the government's budget position.

A study commissioned by the DOF showed that the government had been losing huge amount in potential revenue due to granting of redundant incentives.

Investors are considered redundant if the recipients would have invested in the country even without the tax or duty-free privileges.

The study showed that more than 80 percent of the fiscal incentives being granted by the BOI are redundant.

The DOF said it was just proper that it be represented in the BOI board so it could express its opinion on is how much the government could afford to grant as incentives, and which businesses deserved the fiscal perks.

A government official privy to the matter said, however, that the BOI did not want the DOF to be represented in the board.

Under the consolidated fiscal incentives rationalization bill being proposed in the Lower House, one provision states that the DOF should be represented in the BOI board. But the source said the BOI was opposing the inclusion of that provision in the proposed bill.

There are several bills seeking the rationalization of the granting of fiscal incentives. In the Lower House, the committee on ways and means are preparing the consolidation of these bills into one. The bill being prepared is expected to come up with a limited number of industries that may be given fiscal incentives.

The finance version of the bill seeks the granting of incentives only to export-oriented firms and to companies situated in the country's poorest provinces. The BOI likewise wants to limit the granting of incentives to exporters and those located in poor provinces.

The rationalization of fiscal incentives, a proposal that had been bypassed for years, is being pushed strongly the DOF.

GOINGS-ON

Real Estate Festival at the SMX

THE PHILIPPINE REAL ESTATE FESTIVAL, the country's biggest annual real-estate trade fair, will hold its second run at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City on July 24-26, 2008.

The festival is expected to draw the participation of the country's top real estate developers and will showcase the flagship developments, construction projects, housing systems and services and products in the market today.

Vice President Noli De Castro, concurrent chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), will lead other heads of key government shelter agencies as guest of honor in the July 24 opening ceremonies.

Nordic insurance summit

THE 12TH PHILIPPINE Nordic Insurance Summit will be held on April 22, Wednesday, from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Pearl Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The event, which will be held in collaboration with the Insurance Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association Inc., has adopted the theme "The Changing Global Climate and Regulatory Environment—A Challenge to the Insurance Industry."

Insurance Commissioner Eduardo T. Malinias will deliver the opening statement, while nine industry experts will discuss various topics related to the sector.

New biotech products

TWO BRAND NEW INSECTICIDE brands that the United Kingdom that provide high levels of protection from airborne and crawling insects are gaining more recently launched in the country by Biotech Philippines Inc.

These are InsectOut-X, a biocidal disinfectant with lasting antimicrobial properties that can be delivered by fogging, sprinkling and air-diffuser, and Insect-Mort, a chemically approved, water-based coating applied on surfaces and traditional insecticides.

Biotech Philippines has been appointed the exclusive local distributor of the two brands by Biocide International PLC.

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CEBU HOLDINGS INC.

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of CEBU HOLDINGS, INC. will be held at Ballroom 1 of the City Sports Club Cebu, Cebu City on TUESDAY, 29 APRIL 2008 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning with the following

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
   A.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of 19 March 2008 shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from 19 to 27 March 2008, inclusive.

Makati City, 04 March 2008.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RENATO G. JABITUYAN
Corporate Secretary

SC says Philex owes gov't ₱225M in back taxes

Debt stems from failed deal involving Sto. Niño gold mine

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUPREME COURT ORdered Philex Mining Corp. last month to pay a tax deficiency of ₱225 million that the mining firm had disclosed from its 1982 income tax returns as losses from a failed deal with the Sto. Niño gold mine in Benguet.

The court's third division also ordered Philex to pay a 20-percent delinquency tax penalty covering 1995 to 2006 (P13.5 million a year for 13 years), which ballooned the mining firm's debt to about P525 million.

The high court affirmed decisions made by the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) and the Court of Appeals (CA).

Lawyer Eduardo Jesaan, one of Philex's counsels in Baguio, declined to comment pending receipt of the decision.

The decision delved into the 1971 deal that Philex forged with the Baguio Gold Mining Co., allowing it to own the Sto. Niño mine, which straddles the towns of Itogon and Tuba in Benguet. Statistical losses, however, forced Philex to stop operations in 1982.

Baguio Gold owns certificates up to 39.09 million, according to the court.

Philex wrote off Baguio Gold's remaining debt (P132.126 million) in 1982, and deducted it from the firm's tax returns that year as "loss on retirement of receivables from Baguio Gold against reserves and allowances."

The mine charged some of these debts against advances Philex made when it operated the Sto. Niño mine.

But the Bureau of Internal Revenue refused to accept the deduction as a "bad debt" that could be written off.

Philex protested, the court said, arguing that Baguio Gold's "irrecoverable losses" made it difficult for Philex to collect what the mine owed it.

Philex claimed it had a right to claim the loss because it had "exhausted all reasonable means to collect" Baguio Gold's debts.

The firm also described itself as an "employee" of Baguio Gold because it received "commissions" for managing the Sto. Niño mine.

The BIR, however, pointed out in a 1994 resolution that Philex's argument had no merit because Baguio Gold continues to operate.

The CTA acknowledged BIR's position.

It ruled that Philex and Sto. Niño were partners in a joint venture contract when Philex operated Sto. Niño mine based on their equal sharing agreement from proceeds profits.

"The lower courts did not err in treating [Philex's] advances as investments to a partnership (in operation) the Sto. Niño mine. The advances [Philex] made were not 'debts' of Baguio Gold as [Philex] maintains as the latter was under no unconditional obligation to return [the advances] to [Philex]," the court said.

"In sum, [Philex] cannot claim the advances as a bad debt deductions from its gross income. Deductions for income tax purposes partake of the nature of tax exemptions and are strictly construed against the taxpayer, who must prove by convincing evidence that he is entitled to the deduction claimed," according to the court.

RP coco sugar finding markets overseas

By Amy R. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES IS CONfident it would "serve many" kets for coconut sugar aware from Indonesia and Thailand.

According to Irene Manohar, project development officer of the Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine coconut sugar was of better quality compared to its rivals from the two other countries.

The Philippines also has the capability to produce more to meet demand.

"In terms of quality we have an edge compared to Indonesia, while quantity-wise, we can be competitive compared to Thailand, which produces good sugar but does not have enough resources to produce more," Manohar said.

Coconut sugar is derived from "sabe" or caddy, which comes from the sap of dwarf or hybrid coconut trees.

According to recent studies, the glycemic index of coconut sugar is only 35 compared to 64 for table sugar, making it ideal for diabetics.

PCA also revealed that Philippine coconut sugar, which contains about 16 (balanced levels, is rich in potassium, phosphorous, magnesium, sulfur, calcium and thiamin C.

Manohar said local traders have been exporting coconut sugar to the United States since last year, but unfortunately they were known that diabetics could benefit from the product.

While the United States remains the country's main market, the PCA said that xt. at marketing had already started to Japan, Middle East and Europe.

Manohar said that coconut sugar production is stable in areas that are predominantly planted to dwarf or hybrid coconut trees.

These include General Santos City, North Cotabato and Zamboanga.

Some 100 kilos of coconut sugar are produced weekly at the PCA-Zamboanga Research Center.

Manohar said coconut sugar production is not yet feasible in Luzon since coconut trees in Luzon are mainly of the tall variety.

"Producing coconut sugar from tall coconut varieties can be laborious but Luzon farmers can still venture into coco sugar production if they explant hybrid varieties," Manohar said, adding that sap production using hybrid and dwarf varieties is relatively higher.

A farmer planted to coconuts can produce at least a ton of coconut sugar a month.

"It is not costly as far as the equipment to be used is concerned. It can be done in farms and even in backyards since it does not require expensive machines or big capital, but it is labor intensive," the PCA official explained.

Manohar said PCA was conducting studies on how to increase production using hybrid and dwarf varieties while still ensuring the quality of the product.

DepED
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Department of Education
Bangsal Division

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education – Bangsal Division Office – Bangsal, La Trinidad, Benguet through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the transaction project:

Name of Project / Location	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture
Brief Description	**Package A** – Elementary Table with chair with teacher's table and chair (46 sets) **Sub-total** – ₱1,412,500.00 **Package B** – Elementary and Secondary Armchair with teacher's Table and Chair (46 sets) **Sub-total** – ₱1,972,250.00
Approved Budget for the Contract	₱3,846,000.00
Source of Funding	Government of the Philippines (GOP), 2007 General Appropriations Act (GAA) (75% Advisory, 25% Regular)
Contract duration	150 days
Delivery site	"Door to door" delivery to various recipient schools (See attached Requirements of the Bidding Documents)

Bidding shall be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Bidders must have completed, within the last five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible contract is one of similar nature or complexity with respect to the type of work. For this purpose, contracts similar to the Project shall be those involving the supply and delivery of school furniture.

The Invited Bangsal Division Office will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all prospective bidders on April 29, 2008, 10:00 AM at the Bangsal Division Office, Bangsal, La Trinidad, Benguet.

Bids must be received on or before May 12, 2008, 10:00 AM at the Bangsal Division Office, Bangsal, La Trinidad, Benguet. Late bids shall not be rejected. Bids in excess of the Approved Budget for the contract shall be rejected.

Bid documents shall be available to prospective bidders upon payment of the non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos Only (₱3,000.00) to the Division Office's Cashier.

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders. Further, the BAC reserves the right to waive any formality in the requirements for the eligibility requirements and to bidders.

(Sgd.) MARIE CAROLYN VERANO
Chairperson
Bangsal Division Office, Bids and Awards Committee

(PEI-April 21, 2008)

Seafood facility deal up

THE PHILIPPINES AND KOREA are finalizing plans to put up a seafood processing facility in Dagupan City to be funded by a $12.2-million grant.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said a survey team from the Korea International Cooperation Agency visited the city recently to work out the details of the project, which a team hosting seafood experts from the Pangasinan port.

Yap explained that the project would cover the reconstruction of a 1,300-square-meter seafood processing plant, which will include packing, freezing and smoking equipment, quick-freeze and ice-making facilities, air blowers, shredders and other necessary equipment.

The project, he added, will also include the training of 10 ipino technical personnel in Korea to equip them with skills to properly operate, manage and maintain the processing plant.

Yap said that during a recent visit, the KOICA team led by Kim in and Dagupan City Mayor Alipio Fernandez Jr. discussed the measures that should be undertaken to guarantee the successful implementation of the project, which will reap Korean technology.

Aside from the Dagupan seafood processing facility, Yap said Korea has also funded other agriculture projects in the Philippines and facilitated bilateral trade between the two countries.

Last year, Korea excluded Philippine bananas from the list of products subject to its 30 percent additional tariff on imports.

The exemption of Philippine banana from the payment of their duties effective Jan. 1 2007 has effectively lifted the quantitative restrictions imposed by South Korea on the fruit.

Amy R. Remo

TVI to proceed with copper-zinc project

By Raoul W. Dominguez

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PHILIPpines said it was going ahead with the copper-zinc phase of its Canatuan project in Zamboanga del Norte after it got a ₱15 million bridge financing facility.

TVIRD president Eugene T. Mateo said in an interview that the company started demobilizing the "gravity" operations in April 9 with the closure of the recoford with that processed gold and silver ore.

"The mills are being cleaned up to remove mineral residue lodged in the machines, which would take us until this week to finish," Mateo said. "We will soon commence of the sulphide plant. Initials would process copper and zinc] by the middle of May."

Mateo said the sulphide plant was scheduled for test runs in November and December and for full operation in January 2009.

The gravity operation in Canatuan is winding down after four years and giving way to the sulphide project, which has a mine life of seven years.

TVIRD recently completed the bridge financing facility agreement with UBP Asian Arbitrage Fund Inc. and UBP Asia Special Situations Master Fund Ltd.

The company began its Canatuan gold and silver operations in late 2003 with a 2.5-year production sharing agreement.

Between 2005 and 2007, the gravity project produced 97,023 ounces of gold and 1.1 million ounces of silver.

TVIRD invested at least $25 million in the gravity project, which yielded P78 million in tax revenues for the government.

TVIRD vice president Vicente Perez said in a statement the company had been able to establish "an operating capability that provides us confidence as we move on to the sulphide project."

Cliff Jones, president and chief executive of TVIRD's Canadian affiliate TVI Pacific, said in a separate statement that discussions were continuing with potential financial partners regarding long-term funding for the sulphide project and other assets in the company's portfolio.

Mateo said TVIRD needed at least another $15 million for additional expenses for the sulphide project, although the initial facility was enough to generate some cash flow.

From page B4

BMHI
BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc.

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS
2nd Bidding
For the Disposition through
Long-Term Lease of Lots 34-I, 3C and Portion of Lots 35 and 38
Pamayanang Diego Silang, CS Brgy. Lawaan, Tagaytay City

The BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc. (BMHI) invites interested proponents to participate in the 2nd Bidding for the disposition of Lots 34-I, 3C, and portions of Lots 35 and 38 of the Pamayanang Diego Silang (PDS) CS Brgy. Lawaan, Tagaytay City through long-term lease of an aggregate area of more or less 21,697 square meters.

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to the BMHI and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the lease of Lots 34-I, 3C and portions of Lots 35 and 38 that outlines, among others, the requirements that will enable proponents to participate in the disposition through public bidding of the said property.

The TOR/Information Kit will be ready for distribution to interested proponents by **11 April 2008** at the BMHI Finance Department. A non-refundable cost of the TOR is Two Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) per set payable to the BMHI in Cash or Manager's Check.

A pre-qualification conference among interested proponents is tentatively set on **2 May 2008 at 2:00 p.m.**, at the Conference Room of the BMHI Offices. The objective of the conference is to discuss the property, the TOR and other clarifications from interested proponents. Interested proponents shall be informed of any changes in the schedule or venue of the conference through contact numbers submitted to the BMHI.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to:

The Chairperson
Asset Disposition Program Committee
BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc.
BCDA Corp. Ctr., 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center
31st St. Crescent Park West, Global City
Taguig City

or they can call at telephone numbers 816-6666 and look for Mr. Biel Villaviot, Ms. Gisela Z. Rabaja and/or Ms. Liberty Prado de Leon.

(Sgd.) GLORIA GEORGINA DJ. JOTA
Chairperson
Asset Disposition Program Committee

(PEI-April 21, 2008)

Groups dispute nickel mining rights

Platinum Group and the Tagbanua and Bukwanon indigenous peoples (IPs) and indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) specifically provided that the "free and prior informed consent granted by the Palawenon and Tagbanua ICCs/IPs ... or [Platinum Group] for the conduct of the project activities shall not be transferable to any other entity."

According to the statement, the agreement does not amount to an outright transfer of mineral rights, as ownership of mineral resources, transfer of rights, acquisitions, reorganizations or joint ventures, provided that the mineral and rights of the indigenous peoples over lands cover ests in Nature and Subsistence Fisheries, Fisheries, are preserved.

As early as two years ago, then Chairman of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) chief Jennifer Sreviano had denied a request from Platinum Group to change the name of its certification precondition into the name of Olympic.

Serrano noted that the assignee in the certificate cannot be changed unless it was processed by the NCIP under the name of Platinum Group, which had conducted the "free prior and informed consent" activities required with the Tagbanua and Bukwanon. As a result, the consent was given only to Platinum Group, the conducted. This by Lucia

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Energy
CENTER FOR PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT (BUILDING)
Energy City
Taguig City, Tel No.: (632) 479-2900 to 09 and 840-2041 to 49 local 810

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Pursuant with these duly entered Government Supplies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contracts:

Name of Contract	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Submission & Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
1. Supply & Delivery of Various Drugs & Medicines	₱ 1,500,000.00	May 2, 2008 9:00 a.m.	May 16, 2008 9:00 a.m.	₱ 1,000.00
2. Supply & Delivery of Various Laboratory Supplies and Reagents	₱ 3,887,500.00	May 2, 2008 2:00 p.m.	May 16, 2008 2:00 p.m.	₱ 1,000.00
3. Supply & Delivery of Various Medical & Laboratory Equipment	₱ 2,500,000.00	May 5, 2008 9:00 a.m.	May 20, 2008 9:00 a.m.	₱ 1,000.00
4. Supply & Delivery of Bidet Installed	₱ 1,500,000.00	May 5, 2008 2:00 p.m.	May 20, 2008 2:00 p.m.	₱ 1,000.00
5. Supply & Delivery of Various Medical Supplies & Peripherals	₱ 1,250,000.00	NONE	May 22, 2008 9:00 a.m.	₱ 1,000.00

Prospective bidding should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the prospective project for the bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall be conducted based on the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Bid documents shall be available at the **Bids and Awards Committee** upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The venue of the Pre-Bid Conference and Bidding proper shall be at the C. Benjamin Hall, this Office.

The Bidders shall strictly observe the submitted eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in two (2) separate sealed envelopes on the last day stipulated in the above mentioned activities.

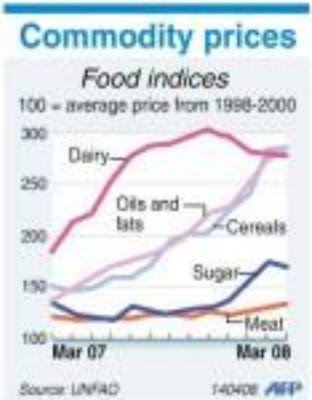
For more information, you may contact the Bids and Awards Support Unit at telephone no. **(632) 840-2041 to 49 local 810 and look for Ms. Fe G. Ramos.**

The DOE-CPD reserves the right to waive any irregularities in the requirements or the eligibility requirements and to reject bid/s in whole or part and/or cancel the entire bidding process, at any stage prior to award of contract, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ROGELIO L. SINGSON, MD, MPH
BAC Chairman

(PEI – April 21, 2008)

Sizzling commodities mart puts heat on farmers



NEW ORLEANS—FARMERS IN the United States, has always been a risky business, at the mercy of bad weather, wars and drought. Now farmers' profits face a new and surprising enemy: Speculators—that some believe are driving prices up so fast that growers are getting locked out of big dollar for their crops.

US shoppers are feeling it, too, as investors pump billions of dollars into agricultural commodities and, insiders say, help push up the price of the most basic of foodstuffs, a load of bread.

Agriculture interests warn vehicles are edgy about what they see as a flood of speculative money into the market and they want action, fearful that it is throwing the markets into chaos and making it harder for farmers to manage their risks.

"We want the government to investigate, and if there are significant issues, we want them to work through what should be done," said Chad Hart, economist at Iowa State University. "Right now, I don't think anyone has a full grasp on what's going on."

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which regulates US futures and options markets, will make an attempt with a hearing April 22.

The panel can expect to find a tangled market, one too hot to handle, stoked for two years by profit-hungry cash from index funds and speculators and rocketing prices for in-demand corn, soybeans and wheat.

Speculators driving up prices

There has also been a rise in planting. The Agriculture Department said wheat production, for example, grew from 1.8 billion to 2.06 billion bushels from 2006 to 2007, and more than 63.6 million acres of wheat will be planted in 2008, up 3.4 million acres from 2007.

And there is nervousness. Some grain buyers, wary of the market volatility are limiting contract dealings with growers, effectively cutting farmers off from crop prices at a time when production costs, such as fuel and fertilizer, have soared.

Consumers, too, are feeling the impact.

Sandy Wheat, owner of Lil'dedebeaux Baking Co. in New Orleans, said doing wheat flour cooks have been driven the cost of the French bread the bakery produces. "The entire market for wheat, over the past decade, has been in one of the worst bull markets in decades as this," he said.

Investment funds looking to index returns are pouring money in crop futures to spread the risk in their portfolios.

Analysts say traditional spikes, driven by supply and demand, have been pushed up. Corn traded at about $2.60 a bushel in early 2006. Earlier this month, the May contract reached a record $6.a bushel.

Richard Brock, Milwaukee-based commodities analyst, said index funds are "literally running the market" with billions of dollars in play. "It's absolutely obscene," he said. —AP

Wall Street braces for hefty job cuts

NEW YORK—CITIGROUP INC., Merrill Lynch & Co. and Wachovia Corp. last week announced 12,600 job cuts, and the number of pink slips is likely to rise as losses mount and the economy wades its way out of its malaise.

So far this year, 46,000 job cuts have been announced in the US financial services sector, according to job placement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. The figure does not include Citi's announcement on Friday to cut another 9,000 jobs.

Job losses will surge well beyond the current level, given that the latest data does not account for widely expected cuts among the 14,000 employees at Bear Stearns Co. following the investment bank's pending takeover by JPMorgan Chase & Co.

The cuts will have an unrivaled impact on New York City, where fortunes are closely tied to Wall Street. Everything from Manhattan real estate prices to high-end restaurants and private car services could come under severe pressure, as highly paid investment bankers and traders face job losses.

The securities industry accounts for almost 25 percent of all salaries and wages in the city. Many bankers and brokers earn a base salary of $200,000 or more, and get even bigger bonuses.

"It is almost inevitable that we are going to see significant layoffs," said Octavio Marenzi of Celent, a consulting firm in London.

Citigroup's latest job cuts, is in general a $5.11 billion quarterly loss on Friday after taking billions of dollars of write-downs related to mortgages and poured on the credit markets, follow its announcement in January to cut 4,200 jobs.

Last Thursday Merrill, the world's largest brokerage, announced $9.7 billion in write-downs, on top of $24 billion taken in the second half of last year.

Merrill said it planned to cut an additional 2,900 jobs. In the first quarter, Merrill slashed about 3,100 positions.

Wachovia, the fourth largest US bank, said this week it plans to eliminate 900 jobs from its corporate and investment banking division.

But as the wave of loss losses continues to grow in a slowing US economy and still-tight credit conditions, Wall Street may be in for a rude awakening.

Global financial institutions have so far announced well over $200 billion of write-downs and credit related losses, with the ailing US housing market a central culprit.

In 2007, the entire US financial services sector, consisting mostly of commercial banks, announced a record 193,300 job cuts, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas. —Reuters

Ghana meet focuses on food price crisis

ACCRA—MORE THAN 3,000 delegates from 193 nations descended on the Ghanian capital Accra yesterday for five days of UN talks on globalization—against a backdrop of rising food prices and an economic slowdown.

The three-day United Nations Conference on Trade and Development—now set to be opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who said that not everyone benefits from globalization.

"We are going to study the economic impacts of globalization, including poverty reduction, wealth, employment, and we will draw the lessons that some countries benefit from globalization, and others do not," Ban was expected to say in his opening address.

While growth in Africa has never been stronger, record food price rises, the subprime credit crunch and energy security pose major obstacles to free trade and globalization.

The Accra meeting will begin with a speech by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva—head of one of the so-called BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China) of rapidly expanding economies, and a key player in the stalled Doha round of World Trade Talks.

But the most immediately pressing issue will be the soaring price of essential foodstuffs such as rice, wheat and corn in some of the world's poorest regions, which have already seen riots in Haiti and demonstrations across Africa.

Plus the explosion in the price of oil, now around $117 a barrel.

While these factors risk weakening the North, they will currently hinder the South, notably Africa.

As the Togolese Secretary General of UNCTAD, Supachai Panitchpakdi, warned more than a month ago, this 12th economic crisis in "a time when the world is in a period of uncertainty and where fears of a recession are inevitable."

The conference is to explore the options to improve the international monetary and financial system, how to ensure the current boom in commodity prices translates into higher employment, and how countries can navigate the trade and production capacities needed to compete on the world stage. AFP

INFOTECH

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer tv newsbreak technology 2207 (Globe) or 383 (Smart)

SGH-i780

Samsung gears new phones for six categories

SGH-B200

By Margie Quiroga-Zypsie

THE INCREASINGLY competitive mobile phone market has prompted phone firms to segmentalize their numbers and gear their new offerings toward specific niches.

In unveiling its new handsets recently, Samsung Electronics categorized its 10 new phones into six categories: style, multimedia, entertainment, business, connected and essential.

The firm even first held an elaborate launch this week, putting forward the concept of "Samsung mobile magazine." During the launch, virtual personalities depicting the different target markets for the categories were employed to introduce the new handsets.

"The market for mobile phones is filled with new models ... from different brands," said Spencer Shim, president and CEO of Samsung. "As such, consumers are looking for design and technological innovation that will answer to their individual mobile needs. They are looking for phones that will fit their personality and lifestyle both in design and in features.

"Samsung's promise of rousing up with new mobile phones is to help consumers through extensive consumer research and by working together with the goal of coming up with products that excel in quality, design and performance," he said during the mobile roadshow.

One of its most representative phones is the SGH-G810 under the Infotainment category, aimed at people on the go. With 3.5G, it allows uninterrupted viewing of streaming videos. It has a 5-megapixel camera, GPS navigation system, WiFi, Symbian OS and FM radio. The phone sells for retail sale in May with a suggested retail price of P35,000.

For busy executives and entrepreneurs, Samsung recommends the SGH-i780 with touchscreen features, query keyboard running on Windows Mobile 6.0 professional. One can download documents and files with its HSDPA capabilities. The business phone is fitted with bluetooth based functions, including an optional integrated GPS, Google maps. It comes with a 2-megapixel camera and a multimedia player that plays multiple video and audio formats. The phone is already available in the market for P23,000.

Under the category of Style is the Samsung Intid SGH-i900c..."The Spirit Of Glass."

It has a secondary LCD that has a Magic Touch by OnCP (Dynamic Adaptive Control Pad), tailoring keypad functions to one's different needs.

It has a 5-megapixel camera and incorporates 3G power and digital power amplifier technology by Bang & Olufsen. Encased in a titanium body, it retails at P23,000. It will be available in June.

Under the multimedia category and expected to be popular among the youth is the SGH-F400. Its power amplifier technology by Bang & Olufsen allows one to listen to music through its full band speakers concealed below its unique dual slider blade user interface. Loaded seamlessly with its 3.6 Mbps HSDPA capabilities and has a 3-megapixel CMOS camera. Available in June, it is expected to cost P17,000.

For its connected/essential category, Samsung launched five new handsets. Its tagline for this category is "connect with more loved ones." The SGH-B620 will retail for P6,500 when it comes out in June. It has an MP3 player and built in FM radio, a camera, an external micro SD slot where the user can store up to 32GB of music and images.

Samsung says it remains as the number two largest phone brand in the world. In 2007, the company sold more than 161 million units worldwide.

N6500 CLASSIC AND N6500 SLIDE

Same name, different goodies

By Rica T. Olchondra

IF YOU THINK THAT Nokia's N6500 Classic and N6500 Slide would differ by its looks alone, think again.

The N6500 Classic is obviously not for the looking, while the chunkier N6500 Slide has more of the good stuff inside.

Well, the two have some similarities: a functional keypad and navigation key combination features, and USB and Bluetooth connectivity. Plus, both are 3G phones with good audio/video recording and entertainment features.

But the Classic has a simpler screen arrangement. The Slide can instantly switch between its and menu on its home screen.

Taking snaps? The Classic has a 2-megapixel camera with an Autofocus, there is no front-facing camera, so video calling is out.

The Slide on the other hand has a bigger screen; a 3.2-megapixel camera with flash and autofocus; and all-love video calls. Plus, it has memory card capacities to 4 gigabytes.

No such expansion is available for the Classic's internal 1-gigabyte memory. Although, if you don't download a lot, don't take pictures every few minutes, and like having all your files in one place, this should be no problem.

Other things going for the Slide are the push-to-talk for news break notifications on your mobile, PC synchronization for its organizer, voice memo, stopwatch features, and the very cool "presence" mode. This allows you to use the Slide as a remote control for slide presentations via Bluetooth connectivity.

There are a few things where the Classic beats the Slide. The Classic has a moderate video recording length of 10:40 minutes, while the Slide's maximum is 10:25 minutes. The Classic also has a sound equalizer not found on the Slide.

Still, overall, the Slide is more feature-packed. This makes it heavier though and takes a toll on its battery life. The Slide will probably need charging every day under heavy use. The Classic, maybe, every other day.

JVC unveils new mobile entertainment products

JVC—A WORLD LEADer in electronics and multimedia—has unveiled new devices that it claims will provide the ultimate in mobile entertainment.

One is the AVX40G, a car audio device that won the 2008 Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) Innovations Award during the 2008 CES in Las Vegas due to its multi-media functions and unique design.

The AVX40G has a protective sensor embedded in the 7-inch wide touch panel display that instantly activates as your hand nears. It then opens up to menus, options and settings. The touch-screen pad lets you control numerous settings with a flick of your finger—similar actions for volume control, vertical to move up/down folders, and horizontal to skip forward/backward.

JVC's AVX40 DVD monitor is considered the AVX400's little brother. With a stealth-inspired design and armed with a compact 3.5" monitor embedded with the same touch pad and motion sensor capabilities, the Single DIN receiver, also a recipient of the CEA Innovations award, incorporates built-in Bluetooth technology.

For the movie geek, JVC's BV-160E is the perfect road companion. Designed with the pointed JVC smart slide jack that automatically detects audio and video terminals, this multimedia DVD/CD/USB receiver plays DVD movies or concerts and seamlessly connects with your portable video devices, such as the Ipod Video. It also plays different video formats such as MPEG1, MPEG2 and DIVX.

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BUSINESS

BSP reports sharp decline in SDA funds

Freed cash seen to wind up in time deposits, bonds

By Doris C. Dumlao

GAIN LOOKED UP IN SPECIAL DEPOSIT accounts (SDAs) of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has gone down dramatically to P245.7 billion as of April 2 from a record P630 billion as end-February after monetary authorities last month decided to scrap longer-term SDA tenors and reduce interest rates on the remaining terms.

According to latest official data, funds placed in SDA accounts are seen as just such those looked in overnight borrowings, the central bank's traditional monetary tool. The BSP's overnight borrowings amounted to P246.6 billion.

In previous months, SDA placements stood more than double the level of overnight borrowings.

"The current levels of SDAs and overnight borrowings are not too far from their respective end-2007 levels of P294 billion and P209 billion, central bank data showed.

Bankers noted that when the BSP adjusted the SDA rates, cash placed in overnight borrowings hastily moved up.

"That means that some P500 billion freed up from the BSP's special accounts had gone elsewhere, bankers said.

Part of that flowed to traditional time deposits, bonds and other debt instruments, additional bank lending or foreign exchange instruments, bankers added.

"Because [SDAs] are alternative products to time deposits, you'll probably see more deposit products increasing again," said Carlos Buenviaje, chief financial officer of Security Banking Corp.

Another banker said some of the money freed up from SDAs could be flowing to the BSP's foreign exchange swaps, which represent the BSP's dollar stock not yet counted as part of its gross international reserves.

Those are dollars that the BSP has bought from the market and swapped for peso to ease up liquidity arising from foreign inflows.

"That's [the BSP's] only alternative big sibling siphoning mechanism," the banker said.

As of end-February, the BSP has built up its dollar stock close outside of the GIR to $33 billion. The GIR as of end-March stood at $34.5 billion.

The BSP amended the rules on SDAs in May last year when it saw the need for a more powerful tool to check the robust growth in broad money supply.

Unfazed by bidder's clamor, LRTA sticks to budget

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT Authority (LRTA) has stood by its P5.67-billion budget for the northern extension of LRT 1 even after a bidder has complained that the cost requirement for one contemplated train is too small.

"We will keep the budget," said Rodolfo Casaul, project manager for the LRTA north extension project.

Bidding for Package C was declared a failure because the single bidder, D.M. Consuji Inc. (DMCI), did not submit a technical proposal on April 1.

"We did not submit a proposal because, if we submit a bid that is even one centavo above the budget of P5 billion, the proposal will be disqualified," Edilberto Pelicor of DMCI said in a separate interview. "Instead, we said up front that the budget is too low for making a viable proposal."

Pelicor said that inflation has overtaken the estimated cost, which was set last year.

"Perhaps they can increase the budget [for Package C]," Pelicor said, referring to the LRTA. "Or they may decide to get the electromechanical equipment directly from the suppliers. That will bring costs down. Anyway, Package A and B can go ahead because fluidity in Package C is the last phase. But [the LRTA] can't wait too long because it takes time between ordering and delivery. Otherwise, completion [of the project] may be delayed."

For the LRTA, remains optimistic that it will soon receive a viable proposal for this component. The authority has published on its website a revised pronouncement schedule for Package C, subject to approval by the LRTA board.

The pre-eligibility conference has been reset for April 28.

The north extension project involves the construction of a 5.71-km elevated line that will run from Blumentritt Station of Line 1 to the North Avenue Station near the MRT system.

The project is expected to be completed by 2010.

AFTER the LRT northern extension project is completed, the average daily volume of passengers is expected to increase by about 44 percent to 535,204 from the present 322,389.

DOF may close down tax research unit

By Michelle V. Baron

THE NATIONAL TAX RESEARCH CENTER (NTRC), an arm of the Department of Finance tasked with conducting tax-related studies on which to base policy, may soon be abolished.

The proposal is part of a Department of Budget and Management program to rationalize the government bureaucracy.

Under the rationalization program, government entities whose functions are deemed redundant may be abolished, while state employees whose tasks are deemed no longer necessary for day-to-day operations of offices may opt for voluntary retirement or be reassigned to other government agencies.

Each government agency is asked to submit their rationalization proposals to the DBM. The proposed abolition of the NTRC is part of the DOF's rationalization plan.

The NTRC currently has 112 positions, but only 104 are filled up.

The DBM earlier said that, after the rationalization program has been completed, the government may increase salaries of civil servants.

"The DBM says one cannot separate research and policy work," a government source privy to the matter said. The DBM believes the research function should be done within the DOF and not by an unrelated agency for better work efficiency.

The source also said the DOF also has its own researchers. Having the NTRC do some research work is therefore unmindful of government resources, the source said, quoting DBM officials.

Employees of the NTRC will be asked to choose between voluntary retiring and reassignment. The DOF is also willing to absorb some NTRC researchers, the source said.

Make us owners, not just brokers, power producers say

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE INSURGENT Power Producers Association (Pippa) is urging the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. to consider making future IPP contract administrators the eventual owners of the plants they will manage, instead of just making them "brokers" for the power than the plants produce.

In a presentation to PSALM, Pippa president Ernesto Ramengco said that to make this setup possible, the National Power Corp. and the future IPP administrators (Ipppa) should forge an agreement that would cover the supply of fuel, the purchase of power and energy under existing build-operate-transfer contract terms, and the transfer of plant ownership at the end of the BOT contract period.

Under Pippa's proposal, Napocor and PSALM will continue to be the contracting party for rights and obligations under the BOT agreement, pay the BOT contractors in accordance with their contracts and enforce the operating performance parameters under the BOT deals.

The two government agencies should also allocate a reasonable amount of generation supply contracts to ensure the Ipppa of a steady market for the power that they will be asked to sell in Ippm.

In return, Napocor and PSALM will receive lump-sum payment from Ippm for the future value of the BOT contracts and for eventual ownership of the assets.

Also, Ippm should become the fuel supplier for the plants whose energy output they will manage, the owner of power and energy generated by the BOT counterparts and the owner of the plant at the end of the BOT contract period.

The government, for its part, will continue to guarantee Napocor's obligations under the performance undertaking that is currently in effect.

"PSALM's proposed Ippm models say nothing about ownership," Ramengco said. "[The Ippm] will process the fuel, market the power, but the ownership is not clear."

In preparation for the auction of Ippm contracts in August, PSALM has formulated two business models for Ippm, one of which will be used as the method for privatization of IPP contracts.

PSALM president Jose Ibazeta said the government then would continue to study its options before finalizing the terms of reference for the Ippm bidding.

Inquirer from stakeholders would likewise be taken into account, he added.

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NGOs find new ways to solve old problems

By Michelle V. Rorne

THE TASK TO MAKE THE Philippines a better place does not fall on government alone.

Sharing this responsibility are non-government organizations who do their part, whether in environmental protection or in livelihood and social development.

NGOs' attempts to turn their ideas into actual projects are hampered, however, by the perpetual lack of funds.

Since many are forced to survive on a shoestring budget, NGOs and other community-oriented groups could not reach as many beneficiaries as they want to.

Lack of funds hinders plans to turn ideas into projects

To help raise the needed funds, the World Bank organizers the "Pondohang Pinoy," a biennial activity where NGOs, civil society groups, academic institutions and other private firms present their projects to potential funding agencies.

Project for the deaf

Organizations with the best project ideas during the last round won as much as P1 million each, which would be used to fund their projects.

One of the winning entries was the project entitled "Unending Conversation via Mobile: the Deaf to 'Listen' to the Store!" submitted by Quadandi Volunteers Service Providers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (QUAVSPMPC).

PUGAD farmers will benefit from some of the winning Pondohang Pinoy projects.

FROM RUNWAY TO EXPRESSWAY,
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It's the people, stupid!

MAPping THE FUTURE
Franco G. del Rosario

ANYONE WHO HAS DONE any hiring, even probably has made a failing mistake. When an exec is studying the root cause of many problems, we might have come to the conclusion, "It's the people, stupid!" The biggest problem is not hiring values are used to make a people change. Well, what's the big deal about hanging wrong people to the company?

Costs of wrong people

Firms with many wrong people have more difficulty executing and retaining the best and brightest talent. They are also prone to higher customer churn, damaged reputation and diminished turnover confidence. These firms may have their creativity stifled as well.

When the abuses by these wrong people become widespread in the company, it takes a human toll as well. Employees lose their heads effectively with these silhouettes, then the company slowly starts to fill up with bullies. Typically bullies win using personal attacks, disrespect and intimidation. Right people flee resign themselves to living with the nastiness...then resign.

Counter existence of wrong people

To counter the existence of the wrong people in a company, talent management must be understood by everyone. How do you do this? One way is by sending a strong message to systems that you mean business. This may mean attaching a heavy weight on talent management in most everyone's performance plan. Another measure would be adopting a practice where only those that really do talk in talent management are considered for bonus and promotion.

In an upcoming conference, "Hire For The Right People" which will be held on the 22nd and 23rd of April at the ADB Conference Center, two speakers will address this important issue. On Day 1 of the conference, Arthur Tan, CEO of Integrated Microelectronics Inc. (IMI) will speak on how he has made talent management a corporate priority in IMI. Likewise, Cha Jacquin, Pigment, Unguy Country Manager, IBM Philippines, will talk on "How IBM Has Fostered The Right Talent-Building Behavior."

The question is how do you avoid making a hiring mistake? Well, you can't! But, if you have the hiring fire and burnout on the values, work ethic, character and personality of the job candidate before considering the skills, knowledge and experience, you will most likely get the right person and the only thing you would worry about is pursuing that right person to the right mix. Talent often spells the difference between a talented person and the right person for a particular employer. Which brings us to the question...

Are all talented people the "right people"?

During the conference, participants will are whether it fits the "values" of the job seeker or play a role in making a job offer. On Day 1, Cesar Marlo Montano, CEO, Berkshand Kingdom will speak on, "The Big Fours In One Decision: In Making A Job Offer." Another speaker who will be addressing the same topic is on Day 2 is Jesus Bacani, EVP, Y Entrepreneur of 2006 and CEO of La Frutera.

There "counts" to keeping the right people

Hint 1

Companies must have in place a red flag mechanism to detect employee unhappiness. Unhappiness develops into a negative attitude in the long run. And what is the biggest cause of employee unhappiness? Surprisingly, it is not financial. Rather, it is caused by the lack of recognition for employees' ideas, performance and contributions.

Hint 2

Develop a strong sense of being in a special place of work. For example, if the company practices a mentoring system, an employee will find it harder to quit if that employee has a regular lunch meeting with his mentor. During the conference, Jess Estilo, CEO of Unigen & Co., will talk on "How We Give Our People A Sense of Belonging To Instill Loyalty."

Hint 3

A talent program is not really complete without considering an organizational development practice. In a study of McKinsey consultants, only 10 percent said that consultants in an effective development team. More often than not, right people learn by being put in situations that require skills they don't have.

The justification so is why this is not practiced often is clear. Due to management misconceptions that it's not worth disruption. The second major reason is managers based their less staff.

There are four speakers in the conference who will talk on subjects related to the third "must" on Day 1, Rick Baker, CEO, Bank Group Philippines—"How Bank uses job assignments as a development tool."

On Day 2, Wilfred Uytengsu Jr., CEO, Alaska Milk Corp., will speak on "Hiring and retention: Why our team members stay." James Velmonte, president, IBM Philippines will speak on "IBM's philosophy about high performance people."

But before we can keep right people, we must first attract them to join our company. The way to do this is to have a crisply articulated "employee value proposition (EVP)." The EVP answers the question, "why would anyone want to work for you?" There are speakers in the conference that will be sharing their company's EVP. On Day 1 of the conference, Andrew Gotianun Jr. Tambunting, CEO, Filstrom Development Bank will share his bank's EVP to provide a contrast between a Philippine-based bank and that of a US multinational bank. Angelo Villon, country chief officer of Citibank, will likewise share his bank's EVP during Day 2 of the conference.

Another important subject to be tackled in the conference is of given a choice of employers, the question often is why would anyone want to work for one firm over another? There are studies that indicate they are attracted to firms, (even smaller ones) that appear to provide them with a higher level of satisfaction in their desire for meaning, excitement, flexibility, impact and reward.

For more information, Alfredo Unabia Jr., president, Goldstein Ballerini Philippines Inc. will be speaking on, "How Gardeners prepared itself to counter firms targeting the same people" during the Day 2 of the conference.

Let me leave you with one question. "In the end of the day we bet on people, not strategies," by Larry Bossidy, CEO, Allied Signal, and by Harvard Professor, Richard Tedlow, "Historically, the company that wins the war for talent, won the war."

For more information on the conference, call (02)(8)(840-3311 (7440)), e-mail bmonitor@mailmail.com.ph.

The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is managing consultant and CEO of Sir Sigmar Consulting. Feedback at mapi@globelines.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit <Group.org.ph>.)

NGOs find new ways to solve old problems

Front page B2-1

pensive for. SOGIP).

Under the proposed project, the daily areas saved in Cebu will be translated using agro language so the deal will understand it. GASP initially wants to project implemented in Cebu, but later on targets to expand it to other provinces in Central Visayas.

GASP project manager Clark Dolor le Pelaez Jr. says the group hopes the project would eventually be implemented nationwide to help the deal.

GASP estimates that there are 2,000 deaf in Cebu alone.

GASP's project entails providing sign language education to people who want to serve as news interpreters for the deaf, and forging tie-ups with news organizations.

The project is estimated to cost P1.4 million. It got P1 million from Bandagong Pamas, with the balance to come from counterpart funds to be sourced by GASP.

Cordillera Rice Project

Members of the GVSP have been serving as volunteers to the Missions for the Deaf, a congregation of priests, nuns and brothers helping the deaf community.

VICKY GARCIA with farmer Mary Gordon says Cordillera is suitable for producing organic rice. She says farmers in the region produce only small volumes of rice for commercial distribution.

Another winning entry was the project entitled "Cordillera Heirloom Rice Project: Heritage-Based Livelihood Partners Cooperative for Global Competitiveness" to be implemented by Benguet Indigenous Cordillerian Entrepreneurs Inc. (BICE).

Victoria C. Garcia, BICE executive director, says her group advocates the promotion of livelihood among farmers in the Cordillera region.

BICE activities include helping farmers diversify ways to improve productivity and enhance the quality of their rice products.

Garcia says Cordillera is a place suitable for producing organic rice. Currently she says, farmers in the region produce only small volumes of rice for commercial distribution.

Each registered farmer sells only 20 kilos of the special rice a year as the bulk is consumed by the family she says.

With proper technology, post-harvest facilities, and enhanced training on production, farmers will be able to make a decent living out of producing organic rice, Garcia adds.

To pursue its advocacy, BICE implements various activities including skills training and encouraging Cordillerian to maximize the income-generating potential of their land.

BICE have the produce of Cordillera farmers, and does organic rice products to the United States.

Garcia says a number of farmers quit farming as they are not armed with proper productivity skills and the needed facilities. With the efforts of BICE, some were encouraged to go back to farming, Garcia says.

But she adds that BICE needs additional funds to raise the income and productivity of Cordillerian farmers.

With the P1-million grant from the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF) through the Bandagong Pamas, Garcia says BICE will be able to improve post-harvest facilities for the farmers, and work on securing accreditation for the Cordillerans' rice produce from the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines.

Garcia adds that the grant will also help BICE produce manuals illustrating the proper farming techniques.

Rice Husk Gasifier Stove

Also winning P1 million was the project entitled "Commercialization of the Central Philippine University College of Agriculture's (CPU-CA) Super Turbo Rice Husk-Gasifier Stove."

CPU-CA dean Dr. Reynaldo Duremdes says the college was able to develop a stove that uses water and rice husks as fuel.

The grant from the PEF will help in the manufacturing and distribution of the stove in Dingle, Iloilo.

Duremdes says many households in the area use wood for cooking, which has led to the cutting of an many trees in the forests of Iloilo.

The stove will help prevent further erosion of forests, he says.

Duremdes also says the use of the stove will help improve water management in Dingle, where most of the residents depend on farming for their livelihood.

He says one of the problems is how to properly dispose rice husks.

With the popularization of the stove, Duremdes says, farmers will be able to put husks, which are usually just thrown away, to good use.

He adds that farmers will also be able to improve their income by selling husks to households using the stove.

"We want to first reach the adoption of this technology to our local community, especially to the rice producers. We want to train locals so they themselves will learn how to make the stoves," he says.

Worthwhile projects

These projects involving the deaf, Cordillera farmers and the new stove are just some of the worthwhile projects that won funding from the World Bank and its partner institutions.

Those funding institutions include Sustainable Energy, Philippine-Australia Community Assistance Program (Pacap), USAID, People's Equity Foundation, British Embassy, and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Other organizations that helped in the implementation of Bandagong Pamas 2008 were the Center of Development, NGO Networks, League of Corporate Foundations, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, The Asia Foundation, Philippine Center for Population and Development, International Finance Corp., Department of the Interior and Local Government, the local government of Puerto Princesa and the Asian Development Bank.

"With Bandagong Pamas, groups hoping to implement projects for the benefit of a community have better chances of getting financial support. A group does not have to be popular to generate funds, but only has to have a bright idea that is worthy of the Lingkod Lingkod Agaton Gonzales, Bandagong Pamas team leader and senior external relations officer of WB.

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FEATURES IN BRIEF

Maximizing PR to sell real estate

WITH THE rise in the real-estate industry and increased competition, developers are driving marketers harder than ever to find and open new markets here and overseas.

Now, a new course from ITMC will provide a whole new real estate PR toolkit for marketing practitioners who are looking for innovative ways on maximizing their budgets.

The course is called "Real Estate Public Relations PR 1.08" for the Real Estate Industry" and will feature: Old vs. New tools in Promotions, Selling to the Business Market Using Non Media, Managing Development and Property Reputation, Communicating in Times of Crisis, Unpacking Location Desirability, Identifying and Managing Key Opinion Leaders and Stakeholders, Useful Tools, Case Studies, Workshop.

The Institute of Transformative Marketing Communications (ITMC) is an organization dedicated to changing powerful new PR and marketing concepts to Southeast Asia.

All ITMC courses are conducted by highly experienced and accomplished Filipino and American practitioners who have made their mark in their own fields in the local industry.

The workshop will be held on April 25, 2008 at the Diamond Hotel co Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

For inquiries, call 632 5120000 or +639 17534624 or log in at www.i-itmc.com http://www.i-itmc.com or send an e-mail info@i-itmc.com

PLDT, Smart introduce GK to IT age

RIZAL (2007) Inward by Gawad Kalinga (GK) in Barangay Pinagsama Phase 2, Taguig, witnessed the opening of the first GK center in their neighborhood last week — the first of its kind in all GK communities in the country. Through a partnership with PLDT myDSL and Smart, access to the information superhighway was made possible in this particular section of Taguig with the installation of six myDSL-powered computer stations.

Leading the PLDT and Smart team at the launch and ribbon-cutting ceremony were Tony Valdez, PLDT vice president for retail marketing, Noel Wilson, PLDT maintenance vice president for retail marketing services and Darwin Flores, Smart community relations senior manager. "Sec. Samuel Kalinga took some time on both PLDT Global's and GK enabled sustainable business models — from there, we hoped to come up to date," said Valdez prior to the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Believed to simply as GK1, the project allows not just GK residents of the barangay but also other members of the community to use the computers on a first- come, first-served basis — for as low as P10 per hour. It is the result of PLDT and Smart's continuing support of GK's efforts to sustain and develop their community while teaching the residents to be more productive via enhancement of their business and computer skills. In fact, GK will feature a guest speaker from PLDT or Smart every week who will visit the community and conduct workshops designed to give the people a better understanding of certain programs and applications.

Also in attendance was Tony Meloto, founder and champion of GK. "We will not accept that our legacy is a country of slums and squatters. We will build a Philippines for a better tomorrow to pass on to our children," said Meloto during his speech. He went on to acknowledge the 12 visiting Yale University student volunteers who were present at the launch and applauded to them to share what they learned about GK with their peers and professors in the hope that the Ivy League university can one day help fund its own GK project in Taguig.

The event was also graced by Taguig City Vice Mayor George Elias, Gina Lopez of the Taguig City Mall, the "Makiling Ladies" of Barangay Pinagsama who welcomed the guests and the "Child Kids ng Pinagsama" who performed a song number for the visitors.

School aims to become center for social entrepreneurship

ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation's goal is to democratize entrepreneurship and management education as a way to uplift the lives of the Filipinos and build the nation from below.

Thus, it inaugurates the Bayan Academy as a venue to offer various entrepreneurship, management, and education training programs for development institutions, cooperatives, banks, educational institutions, and micro and small enterprises. It will also provide livelihood and skills training to marginalized micro-entrepreneurs clients with the necessary skills to put up micro-enterprises or obtain jobs or employment.

"More than just a training facility, the Bayan Academy is a learning hub and a laboratory for developing new learning methodologies and technologies for teaching entrepreneurship and management. It will also develop innovative learning materials that cater to the entrepreneurial poor," said Eduardo Morato, ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation president.

"The academy provides the opportunity to enhance and propagate the human resource training program for organizations that ABS-CBN Bayan has developed which puts emphasis on values formation and social responsibility. Likewise, the Bayan Academy is a center for social entrepreneurship not just in the Philippines but in the whole of Asia," he added.

Courses offered

The Bayan Academy will offer various courses and training programs which will be handled by professors from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) and other industry practitioners. The courses will include Entrepreneurship Education Programs to be coordinated with partner schools which comprise Basic Education Entrepreneurship (High School to Entrepreneurship), Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship (BS Entrepreneurship), Masters in Business Administration Major in Entrepreneurship and Microfinance (MBA-MFM).

The Professional Management certificate courses for SDMIs include Strategic Planning and Management for SDMIs, Credit Risk Management and Credit Scoring (Bill's Best Practices), Social Marketing, Service Delivery Systems for SDMIs, Human Resource Management for SDMIs, Financial Analysis and Management for SDMIs, Internal Audit for SDMIs, Commodity Development and Organizing.

There are other Professional Management certificate courses for MSEs which include Strategizing, Planning and Budgeting for MSEs, Macroenvironmental, Industry and Location Analysis for MSEs, among others. There will also be other short courses for MSEs and SDMIs.

Education facility

"The academy will serve as Bayan's in- house training center for the various skills and training courses and for those to be offered to microfinance, and social development institutions. The training facility also serves as the laboratory for developing new learning methodologies and technologies such as whole brain learning and teaching with sponsorship. Likewise, it serves as a facility for symposiums and various forums on social entrepreneurship and corporate philanthropy," Morato said.

To date, there are three units in Bayan which will be conducting their respective training programs in the academy and are thus considered as in-base customers. These are the following: 1) Bayan Educational Systems and Technologies (BEST) which conducts courses designed to improve competencies of microfinance trainors and managers and faculty members of academic institutions; 2) Grassroots Entrepreneurship and Technologies (GREAT) which offers technical, livelihood and entrepreneurship courses to the clients of microfinance institutions; 3) People Management Team (PMT) which undertakes staff development training.

The Bayan Academy is located at the 2nd floor, Cinderella Bldg., ABS-CBN, Diliman City. Visit the website of www.abs-cbnbayanfoundation.com

DHL introduces GoGreen Express

DHL, the world's leading express and logistics company, has launched DHL GoGreen Express, an environment-friendly service that reduces the transportation emissions of our shipments in the Asia Pacific region.

DHL GoGreen Express is part of the GoGreen range of carbon neutral and low carbon shipping options already available to DHL customers in Europe. The service was first launched in January 2008 at the World Economic Forum in Davos to help the forum achieve its carbon neutral commitment. In Asia Pacific, the service will be available in 17 countries across the region over the course of this year.

With this value-added service, DHL aims to meet the demands of customers who are looking for a more environmentally responsible shipping option. Customers will pay an additional 5 per cent "green premium" on top of standard delivery charges to enroll to the service.

"DHL promotes sustainable and environment-friendly initiatives. We have continuously streamlined our systems and processes to ensure that we keep a minimal environmental footprint. In addition, we have introduced products and services that will allow our clients to partner with us in our conservation efforts. The DHL GoGreen Express is an easy-to- use carbon neutral service that proactively addresses the climate change challenge," said Ahmad Mohammad, DHL Express Philippines country manager.

The amount of carbon dioxide produced by the shipment will be offset by DHL through carbon reduction projects such as alternative vehicle technology, solar panels and reforestation projects. Clients who use the DHL GoGreen Express will also receive assistance and certification from Deutsche Post World Net's Carbon Management group.

GoGreen Express customers who are regularly audited for gas emissions can submit the DHL credit certificates as proof of their environmental commitment. Clients can be further assured of GoGreen Express' processes since it is annually certified by the Germ-based Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS), an independent verifying body.

GoGreen Express packages are monitored with DHL's patented automated customer calculation of environmental performance tool (Accept). Accept calculates the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) generated by transporting each specific consignment from the country of origin to its destination.

DHL has also introduced bio-fuelled or hybrid vehicles in the Asia Pacific. DHL country offices such as India have over 300 compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles while DHL Japan use hybrid vehicles, fuel cell cars and bicycles in its operations.

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BUSINESS Monday

TACLOBAN computer
Cristina Dimaisip,
Remedios congratulates
one of the graduates from
Learn and Earn progr

EARNING BY LEARNING

Out-of-school youth, women cut way to extra income

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TACLOBAN CITY—REMEDIOS ESTRABELLA OF Guiuan, Eastern Samar, knows very well how it pays to learn to cut hair and apply makeup.

She picked up these skills in vocational school, partly because college was not an option, but also because she has always been passionate about making herself and others look good.

Since then, she has built a more than 20-year career on her skills, earning enough to take care of her family. She says with pride that her daughter is following in her footsteps and is running two hair and spa stylist.

The 22-year-old Angela Christian Oliva describes her life in similar terms.

Oliva started cutting her own hair when she was in grade school. She continued experimenting as she went through school and liked what she saw in the mirror. Friends who liked her style asked her to cut their own hair, providing Oliva with a steady stream of extra income.

Marketable skill

She relied on this singular skill in the succeeding years to tide her over since her parents could not afford to put her to college.

Oliva went through different jobs and lackadaisique and she is now a top stylist in Cristina's Salon and Spa on the Eye Federal Center building here, earning enough to make her consider going back to school.

Estrabella and Oliva share their stories to encourage housewives, unemployed women and out-of-school youth from this city to learn to cut hair, apply makeup, provide manicure and pedicure services and give hair treatments through the Cristina's Learn and Earn program of Technical Consultor Cristina Gonzales-Romualdez.

Remedios is a firm believer in the power of entrepreneurship, being one herself. Even before she became councilor of this city, where her husband Alfred is mayor, she put up the salon here and still operates the Patio Victoria restaurant in Botanicas, Manila.

Under the Cristina's Learn and Earn program conducted with the help of the local unit of the Department of Education, interested individuals can take up the free cosmetology classes conducted by senior stylists like Estrabella and Oliva.

Classes are held three times a week and each session lasts for almost three hours.

Passion for craft

Those who are truly passionate about learning a new skill can start changing for their services in as early as a week. Some who are just in it to while away the time take a bit longer to complete the course.

"Some become very good at cutting hair after just three sessions and it makes me happy to see their development and learning skills," says Oliva in Filipino.

Estrabella says teaching other people learn a new trade makes her feel good about herself and keeps her motivated to do a good job as a senior stylist.

"I encourage the students to go home and immediately practice what they have learned. They can charge as little as P30 to cut the hair of their neighbors, for example," adds Estrabella in Waray, the local language. "In this way, they can help their household earn money."

Cristina's Salon, which has almost doubled its size in less than two years, likewise benefits from the program because it can hire those coming out of the Learn and Earn program who show good potential to become good stylists or manicurists.

Cristina's Learn and Earn program kicked off in August last year and 150 have received their certificates in cosmetology—which covers manicure and pedicure services, hair tinting and makeup application—as of mid-December.

Pilot program

The program was piloted in the San Jose Ground School and has since expanded to Dulag, Leyte's Village in San Jose, San Fernando Central School and Tigbao Elementary School.

The second batch of students started cosmetology classes last April 14 and are now on their way to earning extra income. The program has also added courses to include food processing, dressmaking and handicrafts production.

Remedios has high hopes for the program, saying that it does not cost much and yet has a big impact on the lives of the students.

They do not just pick up marketable skills, but they also feel better about themselves because they realize that they can do more with the valuable time on their hands.

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For RP firm in US, doing well means doing good

FOR THE FILIPINOS BEHIND A dizzying full-service supermarket chain in the United States, it has never been a question of "if," but "how" they should give back to the community at home.

According to Vicky F. Garchitorena of Ayala Foundation USA, the people behind Seafood City have been quite eager to reach out to help in a meaningful way.

"I immediately felt that Seafood City was a kindred spirit, run by Filipinos who continue to feel connected to their home country," Garchitorena says in a statement, describing her first meeting with the heads of the retail chain abroad.

Seafood City is the largest Filipino retail outfit and full service supermarket chain in North America.

Since its establishment in 1990, the supermarket chain has opened 13 branches up and down the state of California. It established its 14th branch in Las Vegas, Nevada last year.

Garchitorena first heard of Seafood City from Greg Macaberna, one of the founding Trustees of Ayala Foundation USA (AFUSA), who promptly introduced her to the Filipino food mainstay during their meeting.

During her initial meeting with the group in Los Angeles, Garchitorena notes how the executives, "schooled in the discipline of business," asked pointed questions on Ayala Foundation's proposal for a partnership with Seafood City to undertake civic work.

Garchitorena secured their commitment to support the foundation's Gilas program, which aims to establish computer labs with Internet access in all 6,300 (as of November 2007) public high schools across the country.

When Gilas started in January 2005, only 334 of the 5,443 (as of December 2004) schools were connected.

Today more than 1,000 schools are Internet-enabled, benefiting more than 800,000 underprivileged children, Garchitorena says.

Gilas, which in Filipino means "skill or ability," stands for Going up Internet Literacy and Access for Students.

According to Garchitorena, the things that are taken for granted in the United States, are the stuff of dreams of millions of Filipino students, "most of whom have not even seen or touched a computer."

"When we met in 2005, Gilas was still in its start-up phase," she says. "But Seafood City quickly saw how important computer and Internet literacy was to our high school students."

Right away, she says, "they made an outright corporate donation of $10,000 to Gilas."

The money went to connect five schools in Cebu City.

Pleased with the results of the first grant, "further discussions were held on how to engage the customers of Seafood City," she says.

They decided to place donation boxes at the check out counters and to co-brand certain Filipino products with Gilas.

Banana is the house brand of Seafood City, under which various food and household products are sold.

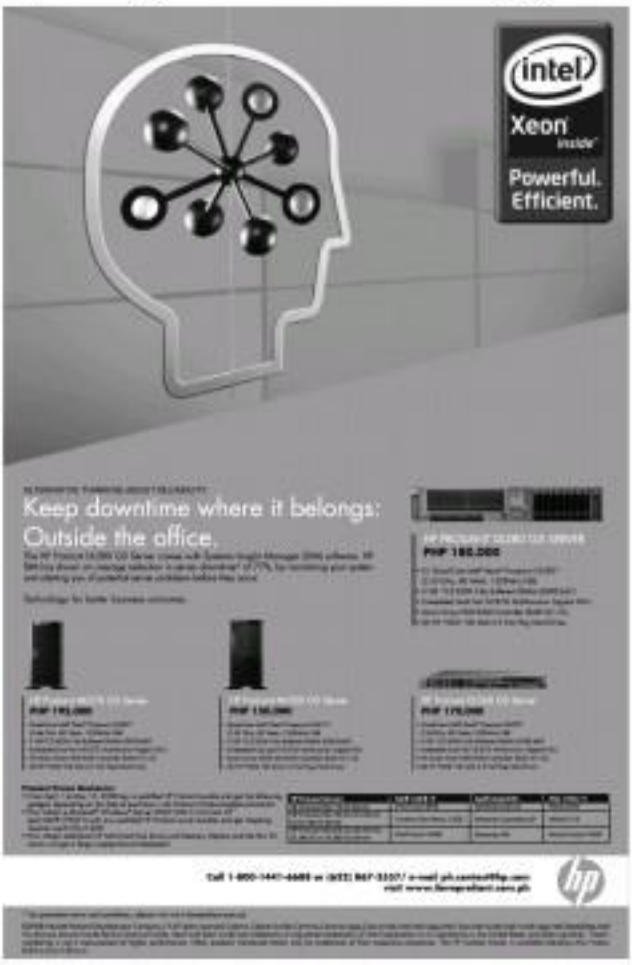
By using the Gilas logo alongside its house brand, Seafood City customers are encouraged to buy the products, knowing that a portion of the profits would be used to connect more schools and more Filipino kids to the Internet.

In 2006, the campaign generated about $27,000, connecting 15 schools in Negros Occidental, Aklan and Capiz.

Liz Hawthorne, senior vice president for marketing, had the

FORMY SEE

VICKY Garchitorena of Ayala Foundation USA (left) receives on behalf of the Gilas program a check amounting to $/8,000, or about P1.3 million, collected from Seafood City branches throughout California. At right is Liz Hawthorne of Seafood City.



MOVEMENTS

ABS-CBN appoints new officials

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has appointed Rolando Valdoza as chief financial officer effective April 2, 2008. Valdoza, 49, previously worked for Philippine Cable Co. as managing director, and SkyCable as regional director for Visayas and Mindanao.

ABS-CBN has also appointed Charles Garcia as head of investor relations and corporate planning effective March 31, 2008. Garcia has 17 years of experience gained from investment banking, corporate finance, and strategic planning.

The company also recently appointed award-winning journalists Marites Dangcalan Vitug and Glenda Gloria to lead its online and cable TV news groups, fortifying its leadership in all of its news platforms.

Vitug is now editor-in-chief of abs-cbnnews.com. She will manage its content as part of the partnership with Newsweek magazine.

Gloria is the chief operating officer of ABS-CBN News Channel or NBC.

Cannes Lions 2008 announces juries

LONDON—The organizers of the 55th Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the official country representatives, are pleased to announce the members of this year's Media, Outdoor and Radio Lions juries.

All the entries can be viewed and listened to in the Palais des Festivals in Cannes during the festival week, June 15-21. The winners will be honored on June 17.

Media jury

United Kingdom, Bonnie Procter (jury president), CEO #fortheedge, MindShare, Argentina, Miguel Angel Recs, managing director, Genet, Australia, Irene Parsons, CEO, MediaCom Australia, Andreas Hofmann, group managing director and charter head, Aegis Media Group.

Belgium, Michel Robert, managing director Universal Media/CEE (EE), Media Brands (belgium, Universal Media, Brazil, Luiz Fernando Vieira, partner and media vice president, 40 ha Propaganda; Canada, Annette Blanning, CCO, Genesis Waterfx

Chile, Mara Dominico Peirano, CEO, initiative; China, Kianjun Shi, vice director of marketing, China Central Television

Colombia, Pablo Duran, chair of the board, Havas Media; France, Magali Flaviano, managing director, OMD

Germany, Mirko Lawrence-Lachmann, managing director, pilot media; Hellas, Sharikhidze Sotiris, CEO, Lobster (brand); Israel, Anat Keidan, CEO, Tapuz media; Italy, Gianluca Binello, CEO, Manila Italia; Japan, Fumitaka Kawagoe, creative director, ADK (Asatsu-DK); Mexico, Eric Morgenthaler, CEO North Latin America, Havas Media; New Zealand, Bate Spencer, CEO, mediaCMD; Poland, Anna Lubowska, CEO, Mediaedge:cia; Russia, Marina Hokkina, managing director, MediaVest Moscow; South Africa, Jenny Sweetenpy, planning director, Ackalaine; Spain, Sergio Lorca (chief executive officer and Latin America, ZenithOptimedia; Sweden, Niclas Fridberg, CEO/founder, The Kitchen Media (before lion); United Kingdom, Tim Lefebvre, CEO, OMD; Ireland

Turkey, Kerim Ilan Mise, VP, Media, Ali Taner Creative Workshop, USA, Laura Desmond, CEO, Starcom MediaVest Group

Outdoor jury

India, Prasoon Joshi (jury president), executive chair McCann Worldwide Group and regional executive creative director Asia Pacific, McCann Erickson, Argentina, Fernando Bertolini, president, Leo Burnett Australia, Garry Horner, executive creative director, Whybin TBWA

Brazil, André Lima, associate creative director, MSI; Finland, Leena Peltonen, art director, Ilmiliv; France, Franck Ray, co-founder and head of creation, solimders; Germany, Christian Gaul, chief creative officer, YER

Singapore, Richard Copping, creative director, Saatchi & Saatchi; South Africa, Vanessa Pearson, executive creative director, McCann Erickson; Spain, José-Mª Pons de Vilallo, executive creative director, EGB Barcelona; Thailand, Chukiat Jaroensuk, chief creative officer, Euro RSCG Flagship; United Kingdom, Richard Rumney, executive creative director, JWT; USA, Sarah Angelo, chair, chief creative officer, standardpacific/adv

Radio jury

USA, Mark Gross (jury president), senior vice president/group creative director, DDB Chicago; Argentina, Daniel Reynoso, chief creative officer and vice president, Ballogo Prohibidad; Australia, Dean Faros, executive creative director, Cumulus Radio Carnarvon; Belgium, Peter Arnys, creative director, Duval Guillaume; Brazil, Kévin Dawsmith, executive creative vice president, Fischer America

Canada, Tom Murphy, creative director, Target; Chile, Rodrigo Gomez, executive creative director, Draftch

France, Thomas Stern, president/creative director, Djazil; Germany, Hans-Peter Albrecht, founder and creative director HP Albrecht; India, Senthil Nayagan, executive creative director, JWT; Italy, Francesco Bocciolini, founder and M+O Milano; Jordan, Mohammad Mirvan Lutfi, creative consultant, copywriter, TBWA/Mediterranean, South Africa, Matthew Brink, creative director, King Lennon; Spain, David Moore Ortega, creative director, McCann Erickson Iberia; The Philippines, Leigh Reyes, executive creative director, YAR; United Kingdom, Liz Whitelaw, creative partner, Knox Communications

The International Advertising Festival—Cannes Lions—is the largest gathering of worldwide advertising professionals and advertisers. Over 20,000 ads from all over the world are showcased and judged at the festival. A design category is being launched in 2008.

For RP firm in US ...

From page B2-1

dinner to visit a Cities school in Bristol (28).

"Cities clearly makes an impact on the students as well as the teachers," Rondrowna says. "The students are always with enthusiasm as they do research on the internet. The teachers can now update their own knowledge and skills."

Later, Rondrowna turned over two checks to Cities at the opening of the Cebu Ayala office in the Seafood Lee Hope complex. One check, worth $23,843.16, came from their customers. Seafood City rounded off the donation to $30,000 by donating the rest.

Since it only takes about $10 to connect a young student to the Internet, "this donation will once again open the world of information to about 2,500 Filipino children," says Garchitorena.

Corporate giants take a shine to cutting-edge art

LONDON—HALE BOB AND MOLLY lobby to London's financial heart and the change is dazzling. The City's glassy faces dropped the Old Masters and are embracing contemporary art to head to the banks to impress clients and inspire employees.

Ditching Thames bankpapers, London's powerbrokers have developed a taste for cutting-edge work, collecting emerging artists, often on modest budgets, as the corporate focus shifts from promoting previous to portraying a bold, fresh outlook.

Many now own world-class collections, with Deutsche Bank, for example, showing off works that stretch from a Damien Hirst seal as Anish Kapoor in its London lobby to R.B. King, Bridget Riley and Lucian Freud in the meeting rooms upstairs.

The shift in contemporary art has also run parallel to a trend to bring corporate collections onto the company structure—to inflate the brand, and enhance the cool.

Where in the past, pieces were often accumulated by enthusiastic executives whose spending could run into millions, the average amount now spent on pieces of art is closer to 30,000-50,000 pounds ($20,000-100,000).

Collections are also professionally handled, with a lot more often than not picked by freelance curators or outside advisers.

"It is about competition and it's about showing they are sophisticated and modern," said Pryn O'Day, a director of independent art adviser Anderson O'Day, who has worked with dozens of corporate clients from Ernst & Young to PwaLD.

"London is a cultural mecca and that has really affected the way people view everything. To stay ranking of the drop effect of the Tate Modern and the Frieze art fair," she says. "And of course, we are a much more vocal culture now." Wealthy bankers and industrialists have long flirted with the arts—from Britain's thirsty line to US robber baron magnate Henry Clay Frick and David Rockefeller at Chase Manhattan Bank—passionate patrons who amassed some of the world's most impressive art collections.

But the culture of enlightened investments of passion largely ended after the excesses of the 1980s, which famously saw a Japanese insurance magnate snap up one of Vincent Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" paintings for a record 25 million pounds.

The arts now, companies say, is in engage the wider community, taking art committees and professional curators.

"Businesses have become more outward-looking. They see how banks forced to keep in touch with generation X, generation Y," said Chris Farmer, chair of the London arts committee at law firm Clifford Chance, referring to people born after the 1960s.

"We see art as connecting us with new ideas, artists representing the new generation. It is very easy in some professions to get a bit remote from what is going on."

Flushing the cash

The issue for the contemporary has boosted Frieze' appetites to promote up and coming artists, often sponsoring exhibitions and prizes as well as buying their work. HSBC launched a cultural sponsorship program last year and runs cultural art exchanges, refurbishing the Courtauld as a hotel hotel.

They hope these will inspire clients and employees, who are offered multiple tours, lectures and studio visits.

"They want to convey the impression to clients, customers, but also to their employees, that this is an awesome place to work," said Colin Snowdy, head of creative network Arts & Business.

"Solid rows of computer screens is not a good way of getting the best out of people," Deutsche Bank—whose works include striking sketches by King and an arresting Francis Bacon triptych based on his portrait of Pope Innocent X—spends an average of under 1,000 pounds per item for its collection of post-1960 works on paper.

Even then, every purchase is turned by an art committee.

"It is not a museum we are buying for, it is an active business," said Alistair Hicks, an adviser at the bank.

O'Day added: "They don't necessarily see it as an investment. It's an investment in terms of bringing energy into the building and making people look—and look twice." But the daring approach can help firms attract clients in wider interest in art investment group.

And in a downturn, more recession spending allows most companies to keep their institutional gadgy—though they with a delicate line on jobs on cut and budgets shrink.

Collectors, curators and advisers alike say the market is unlikely to remain immune to a faltering economy as many major corporate commissions are linked to property owners such as new headquarters or big projects like Heathrow's Terminal 5, which includes a large commission by British artists Long Lunch & Bell.

But most hope yet to feel the impact. And the credit crunch will not kill the boom for art.

"Obviously they are not going to go on a massive spending spree," said Turnsky. "If you are buying all large numbers of staff the last thing you want to do is be seen to be spending your money unwisely. Reuters

LUCIAN Freud's painting, "Benefits Supervisor Sleeping" at Christie's in London. The City's glassy faces dropped Old Masters and embracing contemporary art to impress clients and inspire employees.

REUTERS

EMPLOYEES and Damien Hirst's painting entitled "Kevin Hybrid Lipoda (Inner Elf)" at the Deutsche Bank reception area in central London.

REUTERS

Nonlife insurance summit slated

THE FIFTH PHILIPPINE NONLife Insurance Summit will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Hotel Subicenter of the Hotel Shangri-La Hotel. This is an annual event organized by Insurance Philippines & renewed primarily as the nonlife sector of the insurance industry, according to Reynaldo A. de Dios, publisher-editor.

In collaboration/tie with the Insurance Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association Inc., this year's summit theme is "The Changing Global Climate and Regulatory Environment—A Challenge to the Insurance Industry."

Insurance Commissioner Eduardo T. Malinis will deliver the opening statement while the vice speakers and their respective topics are as follows:

- Lawyer Hermelo Ramento, chair for Philippine Insurers & Reinsurers Association (Philra)—Update and Overview of the Nonlife Insurance Market;
- Dr. Michael Spangler, member, Geo Risks Research Team for Munich Re (Hungary)—Changing Climate and Reinsurance Pricing: New Challenges for Underwriting of Natural Catastrophes;
- Mohamadali Seo, managing director and company founder for Insight Group (Singapore)—Effective Claims Management of Catastrophe Losses;
- Mark S.R. Cooper, managing director for TPC Brokerage Ltd. (Hong Kong)—How do Changing Regulations in Banking and International Trade Present Problems that Insurance can help to solve?
- Terence Wang, managing senior financial analyst for AM Best Asia Pacific Ltd.—The Importance and Implication of Catastrophe Risk Management in Rating Analysis;
- Majid Mohamad, president/chief executive officer for Labuan Reinsurance (L) Ltd.—Reaction to the Paper of Ann Bee;
- John Senghaus, director, client markets Asia for Swiss Reinsurance Co. (Switzerland)—Liability Insurance in Today's Global World;
- Florentina Jantoro, chair for the insurance institute for Asia and the Pacific (IIAP)—Mergers and Acquisitions in Insurance;
- James G. Matti, managing consultant for Watson Wyatt—Ensuring your Company's Successful Future: The Talent Management Imperative.

The Philippine Insurers Club, the Society of Underwriters and the Association of Insurance Brokers have endorsed this project.

From artisan to 'art-repreneur'

LINO DALAY DID NOT HAVE A clear business plan when he started setting up shop almost a decade ago on a narrow street in Pavia, Laguna, the country's wood-carving capital.

What he had, however, were the craft and the skills to sell: Tons of carved movie props and mix-commissioned from over 18 years as a production designer for big local films like Lola Barrang, Tropical Cupid and Hallmate to Bangis, and even the "Iron Cruise starter. Born on the fourth of July that had broadcast shouts to Vigan, for one day.

Every mall, nook and cranny of his little heritage shop is filled with bittersweet memories of things old, forgotten or dying, like the local film industry. "In the height of the industry's popularity, I used to design for four to five films a year. Now, I'll be lucky to have one. It's unfortunate. So I thought of moving, this time a business," he said.

Despite the uncertainty of turning his movie props into a viable venture, Lino pursued his passion and set up Ang Bahay sa Hugis sa Pavia at No. 3-C1 Quezada Street in Pavia. Upon his return by the Department of Trade and Industry's regional office, he attended the "Share Me, Teach Me, SME" program conducted by BDO Foundation.

It was in the sessions where he learned the basics of financial management, how to properly price his products and services, and keep his creativeness from dawn. "I used to spend a lot on raw materials because I considered this as a high level of visual art. Now I have a clearer view of my pricing strategy," he said.

When his shop first opened, the towering statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the colorful variety of local fruits scenes on the floor—all made of paper mache—initially drew both curious passersby and local customers.

WHEN Lino Dalay's shop first opened, the towering statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the colorful variety of local fruits scenes on the floor—all made of paper mache— initially drew both curious passersby and local customers.

But slowly, Lino has it—from the studio for the Komedor Festival in Hidd, Laguna, the Mariscosa Festival in Mindanao to those worn in the mardi gras in Samar, Iloilo; from the traditional Ivatan kinagol made by his ancestors in Batanes, to the colorful floats made out of paper mache displayed in a Philippine festival at the Louvre Museum in Paris in the 1990s.

After more than five years, his shop is slowly being discovered by caterers, festival organizers and companies in need of set designs for product launches and corporate events. Lino has even designed and supplied the props for an 18-semester festival float that took two months to make and graced the cover of a popular magazine. His wares are still considered novelty items and have yet to take off but Lino said he has a higher purpose for staying in the business.

"I want to preserve this to pay tribute to my ancestors in Paete so future generations would know the richness of their heritage," said Lino. He is currently doing an indie film documenting the life of an artisan in Paete.

Better banking experience for OFWs and their families

UNDERSTANDING THE complexities and aspirations of the OFWs, BDO, under its BDO Remit brand, offers a menu of remittance services to address the major concerns of OFWs when sending money from abroad: Convenience, security, reliability, as well as flexibility.

Convenience

For one, the bank has raised the bar in the traditional Cash Pickup service by utilizing its expanded network. Tagged as Cash Pickup Anywhere, beneficiaries can claim their remittances in Peso, Dollars or SM Gift Pass conveniently from hundreds of BDO branches, 300 Metrodeal outlets inside the SM Department Stores and SM Hypermarkets, BDO Onsite outlets and rural bank partners in the provinces.

"We are the only bank that can pay-out remittances up to 8 p.m. through our SM Forex Counters. Our banks inside the malls are open up to 7 p.m. even on weekends. This allows remittances to be claimed within one day regardless of the time zones," says Grace Gloria, VP and head of BDO Remittances-Domestic Operations.

The remittance service also applies to BDO Remit Cash Card, a reloadable electronic card that works as a debit card and an ATM card which one can use to withdraw anytime at BDO, Expressnet and Megalink ATMs.

Gloria believes that safety is a major thing for OFWs when sending remittances.

She maintains, "We go beyond the regular remittance service as we provide our clients the peace of mind and assurance that when they remit their money sending it is going to be delivered in the Philippines reaching its right recipient."

In support, BDO Remit launched a remittance tracking system accessible through the BDO website wherein the remitter or the beneficiary can instantly check on real-time basis the status of their remittances from the time it is sent up to the time it is received.

Remittance for the future

BDO also formed BDO Asset Solutions to address the financial needs of OFWs who would want to avail loan facilities and investment opportunities but don't know where to go and how to go about it. It also aims to encourage them to save and expand their savings.

According to Jesus Ibokan, 45, asset head of BDO Remit, international Operations, BDO Assets Solutions "is unique because we're the first and only bank who provided a package like this to OFWs where everything they need is linked, aimed at providing OFWs and their families investment services but also to provide them solutions to their various financial requirements."

"A further assist our kababayans abroad, apart from the bank's international remittance partners, BDO sends marketing executives to their old flock and subsidiaries in Asia, Europe, Middle East and the US.

Gloria says the procedures and the requirements are also made easier for OFWs to comply with.

Their employers that BDO knows Filipinos is a progressive which shall always be available and shall continue to expand as the bank adapts to the ever-changing needs of our kababayans.

Another innovation from BDO is its pioneering collaboration with JollibeeLoan.

Launched in September 2007, Jollibee Langhap Sarap Padala allows remittances to purchase Jollibee food products through the subsidiaries and remittance partners abroad for delivery right at the doorstep of their beneficiaries in the Philippines.

Available in Metro Manila and greater Manila area, this service will soon be made available to provincial areas.

Today, BDO Remittance's approach is geared toward giving OFWs better banking experience.

Good mix of old and new

Now merged with Equitable PCI, the bank amalgamates the reputation and credibility of Equitable's Express Padala with the forward-thinking character of BDO Remit.

"It's a good mix of the old and the new. With BDO, we established strong partnerships and capitalize on our local distribution network comprising SM and rural banks," maintains Ibokan.

"Equitable PCI, on the other hand, has offices abroad, in Hong Kong, Italy, the US, etc. Plus, of course, we've enhanced only building more synergies with SM and our other partners."

The why's and how's of saving money

HOW MUCH DO YOU SAVE? Do you put money aside every payday?

Saving money is one of those tasks that is so much easier said than done. There is more to it than spending less money (although that part alone can be challenging). How much money will you save, where will you put it, and how can you make sure it stays there?

Learning to not an easy habit, especially when you start working. One tends to buy more for himself because he believes he worked hard for it anyway it takes so much discipline and will power.

Saving is a necessity. It provides security in case something unexpected happens. It gives you the power of choice if you need to make an important decision such as changing jobs, buying a house or getting married.

A solid savings account is important in getting through life's rainy days. It helps you manage unexpected hassles and tragedies. Cash savings gives you both a good sense of security and freedom—two things that are tough to live without. How an accumulation of savings can help you?

- "What if you want to buy a house or a car?
- "What if you get sick at home/suffered because of an accident and have to take time off from work? If you have the savings, you can get by more easily.
- "What if you want to start your own business or relocate somewhere to start a new career? It takes money to do these things.

"How will you retire in comfort? When you stop working, you will have to live mainly on your savings.

"How can you help your family and loved ones?

The most important step in saving money is to get started. Time is small, and don't dip into your savings unless it's an emergency. You'll need that money for your goals. Here are a few tips on how to save:

- Spend only on what you can afford to or not to use into your limits of borrowing money or piling up credit card debts.
- For landline telephones to send of cellular phones. We connect calls may seem cheap but will fill you see them accumulate in a month.
- Distinguish between wants and needs. You can save a lot if you don't consider wants for needs. Needs are things that are necessary to survive you like food, shelter and clothing. Wants are things that you can live without.
- Go through your drawers and see what you can mix and match rather than buying new clothes. Also, refrain buying clothes or shoes that don't get quickly outmoded.
- Learn how to budget. You will be able to keep track for more accurately of what you have to spend and what you don't.
- As much as possible, avoid eating or dining at malls where food is quite expensive.
- Little life. Piggy still works! For all those spare coins in there and you'll be surprised at how quickly you can save money.
- Rather than pay for a gym membership or personal trainer, you can keep fit by starting simple exercise routines such as walking and running.
- Stock up on sale items that you use regularly.
- Buy enough bulks stocks of essential home supplies, at least one pack extra (i.e., soap, toothpaste, detergent, toiletries) every time you do your groceries so you won't be harassed when you run out of stocks at home. Chances are, you'll buy on impulse and it would turn out to be more costly and time consuming.
- Don't give in to temptations. When you are trying to save, avoid going to shopping malls where the temptation to buy is hard to resist.
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BUSINESS Monday

Where to AIM?

Officials of RP's top management school tackle controversial issues

AIM president Francis G. Estrada

By Margie Quiogue-Espino

AIM Dean Victoria S. Licaros

THE ASIAN INSTITUTE OF Management, once labelled as Asia's top management school, has been in turmoil the past year.

The faculty formed an "association" called the AIM Faculty Association, which some say reek of a union.

The AFA filed a case demanding the school owner there over P984 million in back wages/bonuses/attrition fee hikes and served notice to the Board of Governors, composed of an international body, issuing embarrassment to the school officials.

After nine years AIM decided to let go of its Asian Center for Entrepreneurship school after it deemed that the program lacked the rigors of other AIM courses. It however continues to have a one-stop shop in the span of ACE-Master in Entrepreneurship, now owned equally with ABM by its core professors—Eduardo Morato, Tomas Lopez, Tanny Antonio, Andy Perrone and Jay Bernardo.

Recently it decided not to pursue its re-accreditation from the European Foundation for Management Development European Quality Improvement System after the foreign body's initial assessment roared on its Peer Review Team (PRT) showed AIM lacking quality in several areas like research, that could affect its application.

AIM was among the five Asian graduate school of management to have received the accreditation needed to provide recognition for its graduates in Europe.

AIM Board of Trustees chair Jose L. Cuisia hosted a Businessthursday interview with AIM president Francis G. Estrada and Dean Victoria S. Licaros on his office. They issued a joint reply to the following questions:

Q: What is the status of the EI-based [Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business] AACSB accreditation of AIM? Are you pursuing accreditation with other institutions?

A: AIM continues to be accredited by AACSB (Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business). AIM received accreditation by the AACSB in 2004. This accreditation expires in 2009.

EFMD (EQUIS and AACSB are the two leading international accreditations) bodies for graduate schools of management. There is no accreditation organization for graduate schools of management in Asia. AIM is the only school in the Philippines (and among the first in Asia) to have been awarded accreditation by EFMD (EQUIS) and AACSB. AIM continues to be a "Center of Excellence" of EFMD.

Q: After DOLE's ruling, what is the status of the AIM-FI understand] Prof. Victor C. Limlingan and Emmanuel S. Leyco been their cases or they are now free to go to AIM?

(Jeff's note: The two professors were suspended last year for serving the notice of the P900-million claim to the Board of Governors. The two recently won the case against AIM in NLRC.)

A: At the position of Professor Limlingan/Leyco has been sustained at the Arbiter level at the National Labor Relations Commission ("NLRC").

It is AIM believes that the decision was erroneously based on extremely narrow grounds. Le, whether or not, Professors Limlingan/Leyco directly participated in the distribution of the letter to the AIM governors and trustees. Accordingly, AIM filed an appeal with the NLRC on the basis that the arbiter had overlooked a number of issues fundamental to the case such as:

i. The malicious nature of the claim.

ii. The unsubstantiated nature of the claim. To this day, the claims, remains wholly unsubstantiated, despite repeated requests for the professors to submit their basis for such a dramatic financial claim.

iii. The Institute's chief financial officer has issued an affidavit certifying that no tuition increases have taken place on AIM's degree programs in the last five years.

iv. The Institute's duly audited financial statements for the applicable period are unqualified and do not refer to any outstanding liability of the nature claimed by the professors/MS.

v. In any event, under Philippine law, a tertiary claim of the nature submitted is subject to a three-year statute of limitations—something that would [should] have been understood by the professors/AFA and their legal counsel.

vi. The damage done to the Institute by such an irresponsible action.

vii. The dysfunctional nature of the action of the Professors.

"These same release materials regarding the arbiter's decision, IS NOT immediately executory. The pro forma statement in the decision's covering letter about the immediate reinstatement of a dismissed employee is inapplicable in that case. Limlingan and Leyco were not dismissed from employment. Nor did the decision refer to an illegal dismissal. Under the law, only an employee who was found to have been illegally dismissed is entitled to immediate reinstatement even pending appeal. The two professors were merely "suspended."

Prof. Limlingan, who has never been barred from entering AIM campuses to enjoy that privilege. While originally exercising the same privilege as Limlingan, Prof. Leyco is barred from receiving the pension as a result of his wrongful, at the start of his suspension, to agitate members of the AIM community. He is not permitted entry until the end of his period of suspension.

c) On AFA

AFA had never been recognized or certified as the collective bargaining agent of the Institute's faculty.

AFA filed a petition with the Department of Labor and Employment ("DOLE") on May 16, 2007, requesting the conduct of a certification election among the Institute's faculty members to determine the sole and exclusive representative of the faculty for collective bargaining purposes.

DOLE dismissed the petition on Aug. 30, 2007, on the grounds that members of the Institute's faculty, including the AFA members, are considered managerial employees under the law by virtue of the unique powers that they exercise and the functions they perform. Therefore, being lawfully considered managerial employees, AFA faculty members are ineligible to join, assist or form a labor organization or bargain collectively with management.

The Institute will uphold the constitutional rights of its stakeholders provided such rights are exercised in a manner prescribed by law. AFA has arrogated to exercise the rights of the collective bargaining unit of the faculty as a whole when it has not met the conditions to be one.

Q: The Peer Review Team report raised some pretty serious issues on the quality of education AIM currently offers—need for more Ph.Ds and DBAs to teach and do research. What led to this decline?

A: There is no decline. From inception, AIM was committed to the development of practitioner-oriented (as opposed to "academic") managers and entrepreneurs. While retaining its commitment to practitioner-oriented research, AIM acknowledges the need to develop "domain expertise"—particularly in areas relevant in the Asian region.

Accordingly, AIM is committed to recruit younger Ph.Ds/DBAs to lead results of the desired research. Far from pointing to a deterioration in the Institute's quality of education, the PRT explicitly rated the quality of AIM's programs, teaching, students and alumni network very highly.

There has not been a decline in the number of Ph.Ds/DBAs at AIM. In fact, the doctoral faculty composition comprises the highest number of Ph.Ds/DBAs in AIM's history. Currently, AIM's faculty consists of 43 percent doctoral holders, 22 percent doctoral candidates, and 100 percent Masters' degree holders. AIM has been hiring and will continue to hire young Ph.Ds and DBAs who can teach and produce quality research.

AIM has been the leading exponent of the case method in Asia. This highly interactive and participative pedagogy is widely appreciated in the Asian region. The Institute's practitioner orientation closely hews research that is useful to practitioners as opposed to that aimed at academic journals. Similarly, AIM has traditionally preferred to hire faculty members with meaningful, "real world" managerial experience.

What is true is that AIM has not been able to cope/remain to faculty at the pace that it should have. That is what we are trying earnestly to change.

Q: Why is there a lack of interest/need locally in AIM?

ABM's relative lack (9 percent of the Institute's full-time faculty are non-Philippine nationals) has been driven primarily by economics and an inadequately decisive commitment to regionalization.

Capable/qualified international faculty would generally be significantly more expensive than their Filipino counterparts—simply because of existing compensation differentials.

AIM has hired a number of senior, non-Filipino management practitioners as adjunct faculty and the number of visiting faculty has increased. AIM has also begun implementing faculty exchanges.

Q: Why was there a "paucity of quality research" as pointed out in the PRT? What is actually the nature of these researches? Would not the ME program have provided a rich source of research into real life businesses in the country?

A: As practitioners, AIM faculty have always favored teaching and consulting to academic research (and publication of the same in "refereed journals") of the nature currently favored by international accrediting agencies like EFMD.

The ME program does not address that requirement.

The Institute's strategic plan acknowledges the importance of Asia-relevant content and theories, research, beyond cases it AIM is to:

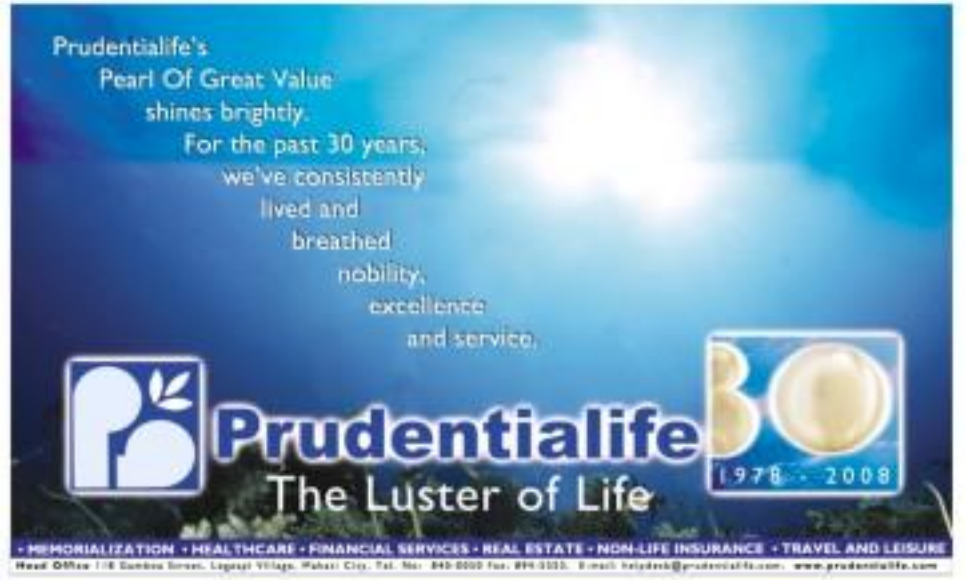
a) continue providing to students the best preparation to operate in a rapidly changing Asia,

b) continue to be in the forefront of graduate management education in Asia, and

c) build upon a sustainable comparative advantage in a changing business school environment.

Research in the past was almost entirely led by individual initiatives ("faculty champions") in their areas of specialization. AIM's strategy aligns the Institute's research agenda with the Institute's overall strategy. It is designed to produce the relevant "new content" and build the desired domain expertise.

(To be continued)



HAVE A GOOD DAY!

"In times of turmoil, go to a quiet place and contemplate because in that silence you will find God. When you need something, he will solve it. Dial the question in, do you trust him to will it?"

—Douglas Warren, choreographer

Editor Thelma Rosen San Juan
Arts and Books Editor Lito B. Zulueta
LIFESTYLE

It's a dirty job and a Pinay's got to do it

LIKE 'CSI' (TV show) INVESTIGATION. Tina Paterno is taking samples of salted stone, for analysis in the laboratory.

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WILMA CRUZ TALAULA

By Rahad A.S.G. Goggle
Comb Baker

TINA PATERNO IS A SLIM, very soft-spoken chinita who still looks like she just graduated from college last year and maybe teaches kindergarten. You might be surprised to find out what she really does.

Tina's job is to find ways to slow down the decay of historic-building materials. As an architectural conservator specializing in historic buildings, she makes it her goal to prolong the lifespan of a material for the very long term (as long as possible!).

It is a fascinating philosophical situation to many ways, but Tina's concern is really the science.

"It's funny how you look up at a building and you see its permanence, its solidity, even eternity. And then you start zooming in to the very materials the building is made of, stone, metal, concrete, glass and you begin to see the microscopic signs of decay."

A lot of the buildings Tina deals with are made of various kinds of stone. The damage to these monuments is all about the effects of nature and time, helped along by a lack of maintenance. Over time, building materials will inevitably degrade, starting on a micro level, before becoming apparent to the naked eye. Sometimes materials fail by undergoing thousands of cyclical micro-stresses.

Only 10

One such stress is caused by efflorescence (now there's a word!), which is soluble salts forming in the pores of the stone. As the salts expand, they physically force open the pores of the stone, which eventually leads to damage. Some stone is literally crushed to powder and begins to erode. Or it may crack. Another stress caused by water loads is removed in the stone by sulfur over time into a coat of clay.

"People ask me if my job has a lot to do with lobbying, or understanding architectural history. It doesn't. All of that—the decisions about what is worth saving, and the artistic and historical value of the structures—have already been decided when they call us on the scene. All that is the work of the New York Landmarks Commission, or of the private owners. We're called to figure out how best to fix the damage."

"We" is the firm Tina works for, Integrated Conservation Resources, Inc. (ICRI), based in New York City. Historical preservation of building materials is a relatively new and as yet unrefined field, occupied by only 10 other such firms in the US. Tina earned her Masters of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, which is ranked the top program for the field in the US.

When a historic building starts to fall apart, ICR is called in to diagnose what is causing the damage and determine how to fix it, preferably in a way that maintains the architectural and material integrity of the structure. They might also be called upon to determine how something looked originally, such as decorative paint or if there was a fresco beneath the current wall, or to make replacement materials look old to match the existing materials.

"A lot of people I met Tabong her recent visit to Manila] had this impression that it's such a glamorous job, you know, restoring historic and architecturally significant buildings. I must admit there are aspects of it that

TINA PATERNO 12

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citi
let's get it done

It's a dirty job and a Pinay's got to do it

From page 11

are out of fabulous, like being next in pursuit of building are usually never get to see up close, such as gargoyles, stained glass rose windows, or the loving filigree up on a roving stage, looking like you're flying over the city, or just the high from working with significant structures in United Nations, the Apollo Theatre, Grand Central Station, the Federal Reserve Bank, Trinity Church.

Dust and grime

"But the reality is close to...marble dust from a construction site turning your joint so gray that no one wants to sit next to you on the subway, having to wear a hard hat, construction boots and a hazmat, a one-piece thermal suit and seven extra layers in the dead of winter and still you're frozen, or sitting at a microscope for hours testing samples with a formula."

Ultimately, it's a scientific discipline, one that involves some chemistry, physics, geology, biology. "So a very it's more like a 'CSI' for buildings," she chuckles, referring to the hit TV show about criminal investigation through forensic evidence.

Many building conditions Tina deals with involve restoring previous repairs which never addressed the cause of the problem, and at the time seemed to be the cheapest option that also required no maintenance.

A typical example is waterproofing a stone facade to stop a leak that was never addressed, or applying paint cement on stone to keep it from falling apart. Later on, the owner finds not only did his repair fail, but it also worsened the damage, so the new repair will now cost much more than if it had been done right in the first place.

"The thing about a bad or incompatible repair is, mistakes don't become apparent until many years later, when they fail, and more damage than good has been done to the original material. When considering repairs, you want to put like materials with like, to match the original material's physical properties (vapor permeability, hardness, thermal and hygric expansion properties). For example, adobe and pure cement are really incompatible based on those properties. Cement is much less permeable and much harder, which can wreak havoc on adobe, especially if applied on the exterior. Lime, rather than Portland cement, is a better alternative."

This is certainly a cautionary note with regard to limestones and almost all the stone churches in the Philippines, which are made of adobe. Tina stresses no a priori on her laying of a church's adobe facade wrapped with a new veneer, where the original material has fallen away and the adobe beneath it is so crumbly pieces have to be swept off the floor daily.

"The cement will make all the adobe it has come into contact with deteriorate faster. In general, less permeable materials on stone surfaces (paints, cements) are a very bad idea. I wish the price leaver that before allowing this."

On historical conservation in the Philippines, Tina prefers to say "Look, I'm not really willing or qualified to make architectural judgments because I haven't practiced here. But I sometimes feel that the state of some of our old buildings have make lives, world conversation seems like it's solving much smaller and less pressing battles. Suddenly using rumbling election microscopes, consolidation, deadlines set by politicking etc. look inconsequential compared to save later, where you are rain pour through a window that's got no shutters or panes. That alone will bring on a host of water-related problems that will deteriorate every possible material it comes in contact with: brick, stones, adobe, and several years of this kind of exposure will cause irreparable damage, all from just not replacing a window.

THURGOOD MARSHALL. Plaster was at work at the gold tile roof of US Federal courthouse (typecasted for Law and Order ending) renamed Thurgood Marshall County Courthouse. Cass Gilbert is the original architect.

Adobe–used in our historical buildings–is so vulnerable

STATUE at Riverside Church that exhibits map cracking. Over 100 different cases confirm they are caused by gypsum (a soluble salt). Condition was present on many carved elements, and there are hundreds on this building.

Ultimately, about 95% of the problems we deal with in building conservation are water related—if the building shell exists like it was supposed to and was properly maintained, many of us conservators would be out of a job."

"It's kind of funny, but many of the people who work in this field are women. In my grad program, there were, like, two guys and 15 women. Perhaps it's the nurturing instinct, perhaps the supposed attention to detail that women have, I don't know. But we preserve old, sometimes really grand, buildings, and get to diagnose and handle the material, and I like that about my job."

Her only are they women, they are also pioneers. Much of what they learn about what lasts and what doesn't is only now beginning to filter into the construction industry.

"One thing I learned is that adobe, which is very widespread in historic buildings in the Philippines, is that it's actually a very vulnerable building stone. For my thesis, I tested adobe by artificially weathering it with several cycles of wetting, drying and humidity, and then tested the stone before and after these tests. Adobe withstands much fewer cycles than other building stones. It very quickly powders, and becomes more porous. This is all the more reason to preserve it with a fine stucco."

Tina is the youngest daughter of Ruby Davila and Ting Pastores, the former senator and outbroadcaster civil servant. Ruth Tina's parents families are quite historic to themselves. One literature, for instance, trace their roots in the Philippines back to the 17th century, which is almost as "old" as anyone can answer here), so Tina was raised in an atmosphere that placed a high value on heritage.

"The thing that made me want to get into this field was living in Madrid." The Pastores daughters all spent years in that city for their secondary education.

"The wonder of living in a place so perceptibly old, the cultural pride was so strong when I compared it to ours. I wondered if their having wars was architectural hostages into dude, let's had any hand in it. They live, work, party in, and by those old buildings every day. Some of our landmarks are like museum pieces in the city, and yes so invigorated less our society energy thankfully for the churches. If all our great buildings were restored, would this help us realize how magnificent we are?"

Young Pinoy tenor bites Big Apple

By Amado Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

RISING TENOR ROGELIO PEÑAverde, Jr., a scholar of the prestigious Manhattan School of Music in New York, blew into town recently and enjoyed lovely and friends in a series of intimate dinner soirees. The specials were intended to evoke of his near-found confidence, more powerful projection, and exquisite bel canto delivery.

"Magagaler ang Pilipinas, Jun, once ng Asyan (The Philippines will be surprised, Jun is the tenor of the century," exclaimed western pianist Julie Mendoza. Now, that's a homerun declaration, opinion I mean, because Mendoza happens to be young Peñaverde's vocal coach.

A more objective—although also friendly—assessment comes from Court of Appeals Justice Magdangal de Leon (footloose, guitarist, and son of the late Sucheral Artur Felipe Padilla de Leon). "His voice has become richer and fuller. Brilliant timbre, unlike so other tenor in the country."

And from a cultural journalist "...he is a tenor nobody pa lang, not much accomplished." Hoo, that should serve as a challenge to our tenor.

A product of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Conservatory of Music, Peñaverde—Jun to family and friends—comes from a musical family. His father, tenor Rogelio Peñaverde, sr. and mother, soprano Sofia Bulfoy, have sang in operas and musicals and are members of the Bayanihan Singers and other choirs. Jun's siblings—brother Siegfried (ng), and sisters Lavinia and Liezel—all have fine singing voices, but have opted for careers other than music.

Thrilled

Needless to say, Peñaverde is thrilled to be in New York, Big Apple, to see operas at the Met, and hear and sometimes meet celebrities like Jessica Lange, Kevin Kline, Sharon Stone, Jane Diego Flores, superstar Renée Fleming and Anna Netrebko, etc.

"Many American singers are technically perfect but there are just a handful you really want to listen to," he observes. "With a lot of them, it's just egotism." On the other hand, Filipino singers are "passionately sincere, we open ourselves up on stage."

There are many other Asian music students at Manhattan, mostly Koreans (stepper seem alo), along with two other Pilipinos—soprano Rowena Sapomanico, who is graduating this year, and tenor Leo Paolo Leal, an undergraduate member of the Philippine Madrigal Singers, who is now a United Pcic in the international choral competition in Bela last year.

His mentors are vocal coaches Jo Ann Dobrowolski Cynthia Hoffman and vocal coach (actually a pianist) Robert Ingerbreen. "I like the fact that they train you for a career," Peñaverde says. "They don't just give you the [vocal] equipment, they look for opportunities. They have a career development office. They teach you how to do audition, resumés, headshots. They have a data base for music contacts, they have opera organizers, managers..."

The good news is that Peñaverde has been tapped for a summer program (July) in Rome, where he will do the lead role of Cassino in Mozart's "The Magic Flute." Someday, Mario Morelle, Placido Manhattan, Pavarotti of Europe and the world? Let's keep us working and dreaming. And maybe our tenor's dreams will come true.

"CINEMA NUVO"

"HAM RAY
Studio, Paris"

'Omnibus' show of paintings, sculptures

PAINTER FERNANDO MODESTO AND sculptor Ovvian Castillo are featured in "Omnibus Omnibus," which opens March 27 at Galerie Ilaya Remmanan.

Once based in Indonesia, Modesto has collaborated in Europe, Asia and North America. His reputation lies in his independent visual style on subjects of Western content and artists has told in headwards dipped in colors expressing the Asian sentiment.

"Colors and scribbles tell about my personal lives. But I sometimes feel that the state of some of our old buildings have make lives, world conversation seems like it's solving much smaller and less pressing battles. Suddenly using rumbling election microscopes, consolidation, deadlines set by politicking etc. look inconsequential compared to save later, where you are rain pour through a window that's got no shutters or panes. That alone will bring on a host of water-related problems that will deteriorate every possible material it comes in contact with: brick, stones, adobe, and several years of this kind of exposure will cause irreparable damage, all from just not replacing a window.

"COSMIC Rain"

sound feelings at the time I did my painting or drawing," Modesto said. "But they do not describe me. I am not a consistent person."

"The scribbles are personal symbols of my unconscious," he added. "I am trying to hear boredom, which occupies me often. Scribbling is a part of the creative process because painting itself is a lot of scribbles."

In Modesto's best works, the world sees, exactly and forever moves through various dimensions of spirituality and substance.

"By contrast, you realize that the world is a mysterious place that an artist must explore to his lifetime. It is an exciting place. You have to discover it. Nobody will help you in that direction. You have to feel it."

"SPRING of Hope"

Ovvian Castillo is the daughter of the sculptor Ed Castillo.

Her 1st dimensional pieces are characterized by expanding and narrowing elongations, in concentrated volumes of metal.

"Nothing explores the rules and conflict of a warm, tight existence, an enchanting or playful line, or any manifestation of genuine heartfelt care," Castillo said.

"Omnibus Omnibus" runs till April 30.

Galerie Ilaya Remmanan is on 2/L, Greenbelt 5, Legaspi St., Makati City. Call 7260175 or e-mail ilaya@pinoyea.com.

BPI FSB's SVP Brad Kingston, VP Celyn Sia-Ana, VP Alex Gonzaga and President Alfonso Salcedo, Jr. awarded P1.5M Gold Sales Coach Jonathan and Presentor Carolito at the Top 1 Brokers of 2006

Lloyd Ordaz
Top 1 Broker of 2007

Lia Valdez
Top 2 Broker of 2007

Rowena Sandico
Top 3 Broker of 2007

BPI Family Savings Bank Honors Its Top Brokers in Metro Manila

The opening number was a Tina Turner crowd pleaser!

Aimee Ko who, right after quite heartbreak from Ateneo and the qualities of comedic Gentle Jocelyn led the evening's festivities

The exciting evening was led by BPFSB President Alfonso Salcedo, Jr., SVP for Marketing Nina Clarcia-ell and Retail Mortgage Head VP Celyn Sia Ana. Honored during the event were the 2007 Top Brokers of the Year as well as the Top Quarter 4 performers. It also gave tribute to the brokers who made it to the prestigious President's List, a privileged group with exclusive perks via a dramatic travel. Special awards were likewise given to brokers in the various categories like the most number of accounts referred, the highest one time loan amount, the rookie of the year and the most improved broker. It was a night worth remembering as BPFSB raffled off exciting prizes. Truly, every broker with beaming loan affidavit was well rewarded.

The exception night also served as the venue for the launch of the 2008 Brokers Circle Rewards Program, amply titled Quest for the Gold. Now on its 11th year, the rewards program was revitalized and further improved to strengthen the relationship with its

Charlie Atong dance moves with brokers Tristan Ramirez and Dan Flores

BPFSB SVP Celyn Sia-Ana welcomes the broker guests

BPFSB President Alfonso Salcedo in congratulation mood over his cash card issue

BPFSB Brokers Home first members of the prestigious President's List. (L-R) BPFSB SVP Brad Kingston, SVP Nina Clarcia-ell, Lia Valdez, Marilyn Villarosa, Jonathan Gaviola, Aurelio Perez, Alfonso Salcedo, Carol Jonathan, Lloyd Ordaz, Rowena Sandico, Aimee Arevalo-ga, BPFSB President Alfonso Salcedo Jr. & SVP Celyn Sia-Ana.

L-R: BPFSB VP Celyn Sia-Ana, Metrobank Head Mgr. Melissa Regala, BPFSB President Alfonso Salcedo Jr., top top Broker Jhelyn Manansala and Metrobank Sta. VP Celyn Sia-Ana and SVP Concepcion Gutierrez

and in the Provincial key cities

BPFSB's very own Senior Manager Chris Salcedo feeds Blue Broker Jennifer Bernardino

L-R: BPFSB VP Celyn Sia-Ana, Cebu top broker Anthy Ramos, BPFSB President Alfonso Salcedo Jr.and VP Eric Ramos

BPFSB officers pose with Bacolod members Antonio Fancisco, Jennifer Barrogo and Cesar Montaj

BPFSB Iloilo pose with Cebu member Rollie Darling

BPFSB senior Jessie Ortiz and Provincial Biz Affairs Evelyn Tampang with Jed Villanueva

Top Broker in the Provincial Category Ramcel Bagaporo

BPFSB business posse with Cebu member Ma. Concepcion Montaquit

Dream Top Brokers Anna May Dones Elizabeth Torres and Aimee Dacanay with BPFSB officers

Provincial power of Top Brokers Ramcel Bagaporo (center) from Tacloban and Jhelyn Manansala, Mario Almazar and Jeffrey Sanchez from Bacolod with Dan and Jessie Ortiz Luy together with BPFSB senior officers

L-R: BPFSB Rep. Ellen Paragas, VP Celyn Sia-Ana, Cagayan de Oro top brokers Jennifer Barrera, Helen del Valle, Kristine Agbon, BPI Manager Maximo Lim, VP Dominador Abad

Torres opens 'Spotlight Dilemma' at Hiraya

"COOR Green," by Tatang Recheta Torres

TATANG RECHETA Torres opens an oil-painting exhibition, "Spotlight Dilemma," on April 24.

This second show retains the quiet enigma that dominated "Dominion," Torres' previous one.

The artist portrays a story in the mystical tradition of the fairy tales. The insatiable Supreme Collector now desires to also collect memories, and has found routes in order it from The Palace of Thrift Ah.

Being an oblate subcase upon-mount willminted brightness, how can she struggle with being in the spotlight?

This is the main story of "Spotlight Dilemma," which splinters into subplots created by the artist's labyrinthine imagination, and fleshed out in words by Angelo V. Suarez.

As a visual fairy tale, the show acquires a didactic quality not only of parables but also of fairytales, which is an obvious influence on Torres' work. The show is a magic-realist parable, but it advocates Surrealistic morals.

Supported by Suarez's texts, Torres' show is at times literally with the comic villain of "Pakbhatar Lalaki" and early Woody Allen.

Underneath the apparent monochromes of his paintings [the bad characters being effusive, the selves and blacks are only covariously punctuated by color] lies a narrative panache of dissonant allusions and illusions, seeking to be reconciled and reworded by the audience.

"Spotlight Dilemma" runs to 30 days Gallery, 530 Ubi Ave., Ermita, Manila.

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SINGAPORE EDUCATION

CHINI Millado, Hensor Jardin and Ariel Yenzon, CCP's artistic team behind Earth Day celebration on April 22

PHOTOS BY LEO ENCARNACION

Artists pay tribute to water on Earth Day

By Amado Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE legend of the Dragon Boat?

In China during the old days, a scholar, in protest against corruption in government vowed to drown himself in the lake. But the dragons came to his rescue.

And that is how, for some reason, the Dragon Boat came into being, and why there is an international dragon-boat competition every year.

The legend of the Dragon Boat was cited during a press conference yesterday Manila Bay held while cheering, drumbeating, brawny members of the Philippine Dragon Boat Team (winners of gold medals in Australia and Thailand) rowered the vessel (pirit of Old Manila.

"In our version, we would like to think that the dragons came to the rescue of the environment," said Chichi Millado, executive artistic director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The press con was called to announce the activities for Earth Day, April 22.

The theme this year is the importance of water to our lives, and the need to protect, conserve and restore this essential resource.

One of the highlights of the celebration is a "theatre spectacle," directed by Millado, a Dragon Boat regatta participated in by 600 members of the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation. This will start at 8:30 a.m.

At the press con, CCP president Nestor D. Jardin said "CCP has been going into environmental concerns, and we believe that art and culture are apotent weapon to educate people, especially on the environment."

Chants and Madrigals

The opening ceremonies at 7 a.m. will feature chants by actress Chin-Chin Gutierrez and songs by the Philippine Madrigal Singers beside the CCP lagoon, which has become a kind of sanctuary for migratory birds on their way to the south. They have been spotted drinking and eating little fish in there.

A new dance by Paul Morales will be presented.

Employees of the CCP and its neighboring institutions will undertake a cleanup of the Complex grounds. Personal and local government agencies, and nongovernment organizations along with representatives from Singapore (an island state which has achieved success in managing its water resources), will clean up the Manila Bay area surrounding the Complex.

The day-long activities will also include an exhibit of native-boxing (made) paintings by Jenelle Bijoix recorded by the Thirdeye Foundation, a photo competition, a screening of films on the environment, and a showcase of contemporary and traditional arts featuring on water rituals, to be demonstrated by an Ifugao group.

"Our activities expanded water as essential, as vital to their lives," Jardin said.

The evening will be capped by a light-and-sound spectacle in front of the CCP.

HIGHERS of the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation

LIFESTYLE

Classical music station cries for help

By Arcadio Ma. Gauvoxc
Contributor

Its faulty transmitter has forced the station to go off air a number of times

THE FAVORITE RADIO stations of classical-music lovers, 98.7 FM dzFE, is in (transmitter) trouble.

Dan Andrew Cura, president of the parent company FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Co.), said: "For more than two years now, 98.7 dzFE has been experiencing technical trouble with a leased 5-kilowatt transmitter it is using. Over time and following the move to its site in Antipolo, its components gradually showed signs of a problem which resulted in the equipment's faulty performance.

"There were not yet evident when FEBC agreed to lease it in 2005. Because of this, coupled with certain organizational difficulties, the station has been forced to go off air a lot of times already. Please bear with us as we try to find a solution for the present transmitter breakdown."

He added, "Please be one with us also in praying for the realization of the transmitter purchase project. Through this, your classical-music station will be able to serve a greater area more clearly and consistently with the works of the masters and the Master's truth."

FEBC was founded in 1948 by American Protestant missionaries, while dzFE was established in 1954 following a government "dial-a-song" to set up a classical-music station on the AM band.

"The audience in the 1950s was more familiar with classical music since there were more foreigners then in the Philippines," said station manager Tiffany Leung.

The youngish Leung quoted "Bravo Filipino" (not the Ayala Center eatery) host Ann Sobrado, who just turned 60, as saying that classical music then was something people expected during weekends. "People were more active in concert going and actually performing the music, but now it's more overprotected."

By the 1970s, the station was on the FM band, but its then 20-kilowatt transmitter was far from perfect. During the 1980s, dzFE was off the air for two months. The station transferred operations to Makati (Horacio de la Costa Street, tel. 8100831), and switched to a DJ concentric.

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WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

3RD AVENUE

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RUFFA GUTIERREZ
Beauty Queen, Actress, TV Host

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MCO mounts Bela Bartok's gothic opera

THE MANILA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA ends its MCO Summer Arts Festival April 24, 7:30 p.m., with the Philippine premiere of Bela Bartok's gothic opera "The Bluebeard Castle" at Francisco Santiago Hall, 8/80 South Tower (formerly EPCBank Tower 2), Makati City.

Based on a Nordic folktale, the opera is about Ill-fated Judith who, despite warnings, marries Duke Bluebeard and goes with him to the cautious castle where she finds seven locked doors. What is behind the door is something to search for.

In the lead are baritone Andrew Fernando and mezzo soprano Clarissa Ocampo.

Fernando returns onstage after his highly acclaimed portrayal of Eugene Onegin in the production by the UST Conservatory of Music and Cultural Center of the Philippines last year.

A graduate of UST Conservatory, Fernando is the only Filipino to win the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions in the Pacific Region competition. He joined the Merola Opera Program of the San Francisco Opera, considered the finest opera program in the world today.

Ocampo is the winner of the New York Vocal Artists Competition in Carnegie Hall, a graduate of UST Conservatory and Fulbright Scholar of Music. Ocampo received a fellowship grant to the world-renowned Aspen Music Festival in Colorado and the University of California Irvine in Barbara Vocal Institutes.

She has performed with the Opera Nord, Pittsburgh Opera, and the Broadway touring group of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The King and I" with Mado Goscoso and Maureen McGovern.

Andreng Boen on the piano is Mary Ann Espino.

Call TicketWorld at 891-9999; or the MCO Secretariat, 8700339 and 0920-9546055.

ANDREW Fernando

eBay rolls out Summer Fiesta on WiFi-powered jeepneys

NO OTHER SYMBOL OF FILIPINO culture is as popular or festive as the jeepney. That's why eBay, the world's largest online marketplace and the top online shopping destination in the country, has chosen it as icon for its local site eBayph.

On April 12, it rolled out a huge Summer Fiesta event with a caravan of brightly colored eBay jeepneys that stopped at four Robinsons Malls to give out flyers and invite the public to an all-day celebration at Robinsons Galleria's, Robinsons Ermita, Robinsons Manila and Robinsons Metro East "WiFi-enabled jeepneys.

eBay gives away Fiesta goodie bags to the first 2,000 who register at eBayph members until April 25. To receive the bag, one must bring to the eBay booths at Forum a printout of one's "My eBay" page as proof of registration. The bag includes Serapia Click Club membership cards; personalized gifts from Jollibee; Krispy Kreme food vouchers; and special eBay promotions.

One may also register at Robinson's Forum on April 26 for the "WiFi jeepney" experience.

Experts will be around to share tips on how Pinoys can find great bargains or sell on the world's leading online marketplace. Jollibee will have an autograph-signing and photo session with fans after her concert.

For more details, catch one of the eBayph jeepneys on their Metro Manila tour. Or log on to www.ebayph/summerfiesta.

Classical . . .

Francesca Di

Cityland Tower 1, the site, was the only high-rise building there in 1997, but soon other condominiums and offices arose. These buildings complained that JMPE's rapid and monitoring with their own systems, forcing it to lower its signal by half power. The transmitter was then transferred to Antipolo.

Dwindling funds

Problems continued to plague the cultural station through the years, such as dwindling funds from abroad (it is now supported by church groups here), operational costs, and the rising price of electricity. Of late, the technical problem has become more serious.

"Now we need P5 million for a new transmitter and to make similar modification to the building," said the station manager.

In the pipeline are some fund-raising events, like golf tournaments and concerts. "Not nothing embarking."

Lenny hinted: "Part of the challenge is not so coming to terms with how are will really be raising funds for these projects."

Robledo was more categorical: "If DJ'S listeners want the station to continue, they should pay for it."

Lenny took a holistic view, saying dzFE is not the only ailing member of the classical music industry.

"You look at the entire classical music scene and you hear all these sad stories," she said. "I believe that if everybody can get together and deal with it cooperatively something can be resolved. It's difficult if you're working alone, especially when your resources are limited."

Do you have what it takes to be a Rockstar?

The search for the next Ray-Ban Rockstar began on October 2007 as hopefuls from all around the Philippines were driven to go online and submit authentic Ray-Ban interpretation of what a modern rockstar should look like.

By the end of the promo, January 2008, Ray-Ban had collected over 1,000,000 hits and 2,000 qualified entries from every imaginable candidate-an edgy selection of stunners in their own right. However, only 5 deserving rockstars have prevailed to become the next ambassadors of the most legendary brand of eyewear ... Ray-Ban.

On the night of April 3, Ray-Ban's five new faces were unveiled in a party to remember in Warehouse 122. Well attended by hottest participants, friends, VIPs and media connoisseurs alike, the event was a definite success. Rockstar in Chris Lowden, Bianca dela Santos, Maryen Hasse Pinto, Valeria Barrios, and James Younghusband.

Each of the 5 winners received a Motorola RAZR V8, grooming and cosmetics from Bio Essences, 1-year subscription to Men's Health and FHM from Summit Media, a Canon Digital Ixus 900 Ti, and a limited edition 24-karat gold-plated with hard diamond polished lens Ray-Ban Aviator Lens Plus 110.00 worth for each set. Most of all, s/he is now an official representative of Ray-Ban in their succeeding advertising campaigns, encouraging the rest of Manila to throw hide in their very own timeless Ray-Bans.

Guests partied in full rockstar mode- matching any Ray-Ban frames. Taken by Coco and Rivermaya got everyone in right gear while foreign DJ, Alston, kept the crowd partying on the dancefloor until the sun came up. Overflowing food and drinks were served all night long.

Partygoers were surprised with goodies as 4 Rockstar Rockstars on the Dancefloor were given Ray-Ban eyewear from the new collection while 3 Rockstar Posers at the Right received gift packs from Canon and Ray-Ban eyewear and 2 Most Stylish Rockstars were given Bio Essences cosmetics and Ray-Ban eyewear.

Ray-Ban Rockstar Night 2008 is co-presented by Canon, Motorola, Bio Essences, Summit Media, BTC, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inq.net, Absolut Vodka, Jim Beam, Hennessy Tequila, and Cuervo Light.

The eyewear fashion statement has displayed a migration from idling and hotel to classics with substance as seen in the real rockstars of today from Leonardo di Caprio and Tom Cruise to Kieron Miller and Nicole Richie.

Ray-Ban provides a rockin' answer for every Joe and Jane to reclaim their rockstar's attitude, creating an eternal style defined by the masses.

This year, we are reinventing the classics with the 2008 collection from Ray-Ban.

"SMB-SMM Blues," by Maura Mulong

VISUAL ARTS

'Obras' at Galerie Stephanie

Galerie Stephanie formally opens its doors April 24, 7 p.m., with an exhibit featuring 25 works from the masters. "Obras" showcases the works of National Artists Fernando Amorsolo, Napoleon Abueva, Jose Joya, Abdul Mati Imao, Ang Kiukok and Bencab; Presidential Medal of Merit awardees Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, Juvenal Sanso and Nena Saguil; and awardees Maximo Mulong Santos, Romulo Olazo and Roman Cristo. The show runs until May 9. Galerie Stephanie is at Unit 1B, Pan Pacific Bldg., 183 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Libis, QC. Call 1 09-488, 5635-5/ 5/ 5635 or 0911-8946855.

Velasco-Guiao at Blue Ridge

Lolly Velasco-Guiao will hold her eighth solo show at her residence, 1 Thermopylae Drive, Blue Ridge B, QC, May 1-31. Her subjects are flowers, landscapes and still life. The artist captures these in oil and canvas. Call 6431222.

Aviado at Crucible

"Kind of Blue," pieces in acrylic on canvas by Fondy Aviado, will be on view April 22-May 2 in Crucible Gallery, 61., 5M Megamall, Mandaluyong. The paintings were inspired by the classic jazz album "Kind of Blue." Aviado's works clearly show the art of impressionism. The minimal use of tones and texture give the paintings an aura of mystery and character not unlike jazz music played by Davis. Call 6356606.

"Del Twist Ni Lyan and Hans," by Wesly Chavez

Group exhibit at White Box

White Box Studio in Mall 88, Cubao Expo, Araneta Center, Cubao, QC, presents "Second-Hand Beginnings," featuring works by Wesly Chavez, Alfredo Morada and Liz Zamoranos. April 25-May 8.

Art workshop

Tricia Art Workshop is now accepting students 5 years old and above for its painting course April 23-May 9. The sessions will be held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The workshop aims to introduce students to painting as medium for both realistic representation and self-expression in both watercolor and acrylic. Topics include basic color theory, still life and abstract art. The course will be taught by artteachers Katrina Boo and Ryan Fernandez. Workshops will be held at 22 South Mars, Private Homes, QC. Call 83988 16 or 0918-4609055.

Gallery tour

The Ayala Museum presents a gallery tour on "Simon Flores: His Life and Works" by Ines-neth Fuguera, April 26 at 2 p.m. The tour is in line with the ongoing exhibit of the works of Simon de la Rosa Flores until May 25 in SF. Galleries of Ayala Museum. Call 7577111 to 21.

GROUP EXHIBIT AT PHILAM

A group of painters presents "Going Fiesta sa Philam," May 2-17, at the lobby of Philamlife Bldg., 184 Avenue, Ermita, Manila. Participating artists include Boy Aguilo, Benny Calimlim, Raul Clayan, Mike Herrera, Ben Infante, Jose Dingbaan, Ronnie Jimenez, Rudy Lumod, Lloyd Ornos, Elmer Obra, Franklin Obra, Rodel Rillera and Fernando B. Soto.

"PAGMO Summer," by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz

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Concord Grapes Vs. Obesity and Other Health Risks

Don't look now but our 'expanding' waistline may indicate slowing and wheels, as everybody knows, puts our health into a risky situation.

But before we jump again onto another band fad in taking waist size, one thing we should do aside from exercising is change our eating — and drinking — habit. It's about time we loaded our bodies with fruits and vegetables abundant in powerful antioxidants and phytonutrients. It's about time we included 100% grape juice made from Concord grapes as part of our healthy diet.

As studies of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey in America showed that adults who ate watermelon fruits like Concord grape juice were significantly less likely to be overweight or obese. Aside from a lower risk of increased waist size, the study also showed that consuming purple/blue fruits and vegetables was also associated with significantly reduced risks in having high blood pressure and low HDL or good cholesterol.

Concord grapes are not called an antioxidant superfood for nothing. Actually, they contain polyphenolics which help to make our body — our mind and heart included — healthy. These antioxidants from Concord grapes protect our cells from the damaging effects of free radicals that may lead to chronic diseases. They help promote a healthy cardiovascular system and stimulate production of nitric oxide to allow greater flexibility in our arteries.

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MANILA'S "Bumblebee" lamp is all whimsy and sheets of color.

China is not a competitor but a market

PAGSULAT'S accent piece of rice-paper cutouts

Manila FAME goes lean and green

Text by Alex T. Nerpio
Photos by Jim Eidan Paredes

AS FAR AS FOLKS BEHIND LAST week's Manila FAME International are concerned, it will forever go green.

And such thinking went beyond the usual appeal to furniture and housewares collectors can ever plaster materials.

Led by multi-awarded designers Miki Narval and Tito Pascila, organizers challenged participants to think of sustainable ways to produce products without causing further strain on the environment.

"We've always been pushing design," said Rhea Matute, department executive director of the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Cittem), the event's organizer. "With a Colombian partner, we've come also pushing new and better ways to manufacture products economically without neglecting the environment and the design process."

SPEEDY! Craft Asia wood with mother-of-pearl to come up with eye-catching fruit baskets.

Pascila at Manila Peninsula

Apart from color trends, Cittem also held a seminar on lean manufacturing, which emphasized the importance of a viable and streamlined production system regardless of the product.

"When you're 'lean,'" said Matute, "you tend to forget those things. One point is, there are always better, cheaper and faster ways to produce globally competitive products."

Biggest fair

Now on its 25th year, the homegrown trade fair seemed ready for any bold fair the first time at the newly opened SMX Convention Center in Pasay City. Because of the event's 17,000-sq. m area, the latest edition was by far the biggest.

At its years past, it featured world-class Philippine made furniture, homeware, holiday décor and fashion accessories but continue to attract buyers from abroad.

Cittem tapped Narval as overall creative director and Pascila (furniture and housewares), Al Cayanan (holiday décor) and Dexter Crespo (fashion accessories) as consultants.

As the fair's featured homeware designer, Pascila's latest designs for other companies were also featured. Apart from showing her range as an artist, the pieces reaffirmed the famed Filipino creativity.

"Filipino craftsmen are adept at using all sorts of materials and fusing them to achieve a particular effect," said Pascila. "This unique ability a prevailing trend, sets us apart from the competition."

At the same time, Pascila had to keep in mind where these companies were good at. It wasn't simply a matter of coming up with revolutionary designs, but also providing them with ideas that matched their respective strengths.

"There's no point designing something they can't produce well at first enough," said Pascila, whose own Mind Masters has produces vases, candleholders and accent pieces made of hand-laid paper.

HILO Narval of Evolve

Prevailing trends

Kalikasan, for instance, featured pineapple figurines made from a series of coiled wire, while Mamon's Legacy presented elongated vases of wood chips.

Aperdy Craft mixed wood with conches of pearl to produce eye-catching fruit baskets.

Others were either a bit more rational or outlandish. Pipe Bath presented a collection of dried vines, while Bamad glued together small pieces of wood to produce unique furniture and accent pieces.

Even Narval, a member of the famed Bhoysensen B, set aside metal and dark colors to produce more-looking yet trendy modern lamps of wicker for Evolve. He advised this by resorting to textured shapes.

"Europeans are more open to radical approaches to design than Americans," said Narval. "While US buyers from big department store chains tend to look for more mainstream products, their European counterparts prefer unique items."

Most Europeans don't mind paying a premium, as most of the high-end products that buyers source from the Philippines end up in specialty stores.

Pascila dismissed the threat Chinese companies posed against Filipino firms. As the northern giant becomes more affluent, its products are no longer as cheap as they once were.

"Let's stop thinking of the Chinese as competitors," she said, "and start thinking of them as a market."

FAMILIAL resolutions made memorable with modern shapes.

FIRST Basis's "Phantasmo" lamp of rattan

'Sequels' is the best of Next

Such is the mystery of the BookWorld

By Basil S. De Vera

WHEN "THE EYRE AFFAIR" came out in 2001, readers were charmed by the book's playful inventiveness, especially by its heroine, detective Thursday Next, who would literally jump into books on fix anything that's gone wrong, as an agent of Jurisfiction.

Tough and thoughtful, named by Mrs. Gershaun of "Great Expectations" fame, Next duly carried the sequels "Lost in a Good Book" and "The Well of Lost Plots."

Admittedly, the probability of Fforde's lobbyable humor getting used was high at the conclusion of 2004's "Something Rotten," which left Next in another series, "Nursery," while in entertaining read, left wan and bored, with Fforde seemingly giving Next a happy ending and readers withdrawal symptoms.

Over three years later, the respite has definitely reinvigorated Fforde. "First Among Sequels" (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2007, 400 pages) is audacious in every way: The novel begins 14 years after the last one, with Next now a mother of several and—seriously—selling carpets. By taking unexpected risks with "Sequels," Fforde sets high.

"Sequels" isn't so doppelgänger as there is an enormous amount of catching up to be done. Fforde sets breathless Next with enough challenges to intimidate a crossword puzzle: a haunting, a possible dodo-napping, a fictional murder, illicit choose-cuckle, a tempered mentality. Her love interesting readers are her exact duplicates, except that one's an overly connected time hippie and the other is a leather-clad gun nut.

Yet there is a clandestine menace at the heart of "Sequels," one that will require Next to understand the mysteries of the BookWorld. Reveals the reader from the books like never before, a threat that comes too close to home and has sinister repercussions to the Orchard (that's the local world to you and me).

It is here that Fforde reinvents his narrative like never before, planting clues and challenging things up every few dozen readers. The amount of new twists and clever references in "Sequels" is staggering.

The BookWorld has just become a much bigger and dangerous place. "The Book World was a wonderful for the nonsense," Next writes. "It has served to the imagination every continuing world of fiction could see the interpersonal satisfaction cadet misspelled, categorized or violenced to text."

Once the threat is uncovered, "Sequels" gains page power, never slowing down on its way through a couple of head-spinning twists before comfortably running in a halt on the last page, a page that will literally leave readers breathless.

Fforde unbookmarks the narrative's diverse quality, making fun of the novel's making fun of itself and explaining the mysteries of the BookWorld like never before.

So stunned that "Sequels" is not a good jumping-on point for unfamiliar readers. The book is bursting at the seams with characters from the first four books, and the blind Next finds herself in has links to what happened in those earlier stories, leaving first-time readers disinterested with all the back-story and in jokes.

"I had been pressing around the inside of

the BookWorld for nigh on 28 years and had faced almost all of the terrors that could be thrown in my direction," Next says. "And with a mild tingling sensation, we were somewhere else entirely."

With "Sequels," Next evolves into an even more realized character, a mother, wife, amateur and confyer who must think off the page to triumph. Hers for her shadowy antagonists.

With its full-blown paranoia and rousing ambition, "Sequels" is the most action-packed of the Thursday Next novels, as well as the most enjoyably complex. With Jasper Fforde's smart comic elements, dynamic plotting and killer characters, "First Among Sequels" is the best Thursday Next novel yet, better than even "The Eyre Affair," a fitting start of an original idea evolving even better than anyone expected.

Available in bookstores' Fforde Fully Booked

New book tackles the art of Fred Ramirez

PUBLISHER MAHLEPAE SCIABAR will launch the collectable book "Modern Art by Fred Ramirez" April 26 at Ilan Restaurant in Little Baguio, San Juan.

The book compiles the abstract works in water, acrylic and mixed media of Ramirez, who used 24-karat gold to embellish choice pieces in the collection.

A native of Leyte, Ramirez is an accomplished painter who was former president of the Philippine Association of Figurative Artists and board member of the Art Association of the Philippines. He has also been named one of "Top Five Watercolorists" by Gallery Genesis.

"Fred has impressed me with the audacity of his work, coupled with his humility and generosity as an artist," said Aguilar.

Aguilar's publications include the best-selling "Myths and Legends of the Philippines" (volumes 1 and 2 (with artworks by Jon Martinez), "Philippine Coral Reefs in Watercolor" and "Yin and Yang" by Rafael Tutt, "Pastel" by Greg Bolinao, "Seascapes" by Roland Santos, and "Philippine Scenes" by Bik Mananquil.

"In our country struggles to find itself through the roots of a fragmented culture, I firmly believe that rediscovering our heritage through the arts is a potent salve for our collective healing," Aguilar said.

In the book, Ramirez's works are thematically clustered into "Fire," "Water and Wood," "Earth" and "Oil."

Art critic Gil Reyes wrote: "Easily evident upon viewing the watercolors of Ramirez is the deliberately handling of his material. Clearly, the years he spent as an engineering student served him in good stead. Precise and calculated, the composition is geometrically delineated with ruled graphite. Upon these stark lines, symmetrically shaping space, are flooded, using wet-on-wet technique, the chic, amorphous hues blending into each other... These are works of vibrant tension, with elegantly timed hues enchanting through a delicate blitz of grays and browns. The sense of color struggle to crystallize the emotion of the watercolor painting. From a centric point of view, these watercolors are, by turns, formal and observed phenomena."

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-2229 Series of 2008

Companies need 'coaching' too, best-selling author says

Coaching can transform a firm into a feedback-open and performance-based culture

By Dexter R. Flavila
Contributor

PICTURE AN ORGANIZATION WITH people who are committed to always give their best without fear of failure, one where each member's thoughts and ideas are valued and treated with respect and compassion, where work becomes fun so that results are consistently achieved and sometimes even exceeded.

Though it may seem like something out of Utopia, it is something that can be achieved by any company as long as "culture of coaching" is practiced by everyone involved.

Motivation speaker and author Thomas Crane knows this perfectly. The author of the best-seller "The Heart of Coaching: Creating Coaching Culture for Outstanding Results," Crane was in Manila recently for book-signing sessions at PowerBooks Greenhills and a two-day seminar at Peninsula Manila on "transformational coaching", organized by the Institute of Training and Development (ITD).

Crane explained that the essence of coaching could best be described as "commitment-driven," turning the workplace into a more lively and spontaneous environment.

Coaching, he said, is a healthy, positive, and enabling process that develops the capacity of people to solve today's business problems. A manager or leader uses coach people's spirit and rekindle what deeply matters to them. The leader's mindset, therefore, changes from "the boss of people" to "the coach for people."

CRANE at a book signing at PowerBooks Greenhills

Transform

"I'd like to think of coaching as a carriage that takes people from point A to point B," Crane said. "It is a field of management practices that can transform an organization into a performance-based and feedback-rich culture."

Crane is a veteran in organization development and has worked as consultant and engagement leader for the last 20 years in small and large companies going through strategic change and culture alignment, before founding Crane Consulting in 1995. Thomas was recognized as "Irish Industry Leadership for nine years.

He's an expert on various areas: building coaching cultures to support high performances; leadership development; coaching skills; high performance team-building and group facilitation. He has authored several vision-and-culture-assessment instruments.

Email the author at dexterflo@yahoo.com

Tula text poetry winners known

THE FILIPINO INSTITUTE OF Translation, Inc (FIT) announces the **fourth and final week winners of "Kanino Ito sa Kasukdulan? / Para Kay Nena Ko Tanil) text poetry writing contest.**

The jury was chaired by National Artist for Literature Virgilio S. Almario and composed of Vim Nadera and Rory Bonifacio.

The winners were Renee Concepcion's poem. The jury said they chose it for its subtle indictment of contemporary social corruption and feckless mood for the future.

Magit kunin ko sa 'yong sindi
Sa aray nating salitaan
Ng bayan? Ayoming tugot
Umpisa ng pangangarap

—Renel Concepcion

Honorable mention:
Dalhin ng samahan
Aralin ng kasaysayan
Pangil' higit ng numipis
Di'masusulat ang kasuotan.

—Arthur Casimiro

Mensahenang "Iron Lady,"
Mom nasanghot ang Gawi,
Mgayon nanay's na-TPE,
Hiling'mayo'ng "Sorry"!

—Jonely M. Arpilleda

Ang dito ay sinungaling
Kuting nalot ng pusalim,
Mumalitaw ng demokrasi
Pawala'y pahirapin.

—Noel T. Rotoni

Ako ang pang-Pangulo,
Kwag tinuturo'yo ang sandlo mo;
May ipin, ahuecha, Lotto,
Pitumwong Hukl-Bala.

—Renee Concepcion

Thousands of votes were written via SMS cellphone technology from as far away as Hong Kong and Guam. Hundreds more opted to use the e-mail.

The month-long "Kanino Ito Sa Kasukdulan?" roster of winners include Dexie de la Cruz, Jun Belde, Frank Rivera, Raul Funilas and Adjani Arcangel (first week); Carmelo Lorenzo, Alano G. Lorena, Raul Funilla, Fernando Gonzales and Alexander Martin Remollino (second week); Virgilio S. Dionisio, Frank Rivera, Reuel Concepcion, Noel T. Rotoni and Gemma Cervantes (third week); and Renee Concepcion, Arthur Casimiro, Jonely M. Arpilleda and Noel T. Rotoni (fourth week).

On April 26, they will be honored by the FIT in an awarding ceremony to be held at the College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

LIFESTYLE

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NEXT only are Bahai artifacts interesting thoroughly Modern architecture, the layering of architectural space at Amanda resort in Bahai also recreates traditional Filipino planning.

Architects with solid foundation in culture and heritage can create the feel of a truly contemporary Filipino home

Is there a Filipino Modern style?

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

THERE'S THE GENERIC Asian Modern, but there's also an Indonesian Modern, Indian Modern and other Moderns. There probably exists a Bombay, Jakarta or Malacca Modern as well.

What about those nostalgia-based "copinoi Modern" styles derived from Portuguese, Dutch, French and British colonial forays into different territories and cultures of Asia?

Where in this style spectrum is a Filipino Modern?

Why didn't the 350-year Spanish era in the Philippines develop into its own nostalgia-based contemporary style, like the British flag did in India or the Dutch in old Batavia?

Then there was the 50-year American rule that produced quite an impact on the Filipino mind-set and lifestyle.

Despite the pretty good grip people, especially media, have on the different variations of "tropical Modern" styles, many Filipinos remain confused by Filipino Modern.

Is there such a style?

If by "modernizing" you mean updating traditions in response to lifestyle and technology changes, the answer is yes.

Filipino style has modernized through the centuries.

The history of modernization begins with the single-room bahay-kubo built on stilts, of wood, bamboo and thatch—the prototype Philippine house.

When the Spanish came in the 16th century, they introduced a building technology that improved and expanded the bahay-kubo, changing its thatch roof to tiles-on-capiz.

Stone construction, unknown in the hardwood-growing tropics, was introduced. The house's ground floor, previously open to the elements, was now enclosed with a thick, protective stone wall.

The main living floor, also elevated, was sealed off from the elements by a series of sliding windows.

"Bahay-kubo" to "bahay-na-bato"

The bahay-kubo, modernized into bahay-na-bato, continued to modernize over the centuries, alongside lifestyle changes and technological advances that improved construction processes.

The American colonial period beginning in the late 19th century gave a new twist to Philippine lifestyle, noting a change in architecture from the heavy stone-based proportions of the bahay na bato to more graceful houses built in the traditional style of tropical hardwood. In place of stone were concrete and steel, the latest technological breakthrough.

The bahay na-bato, as a 20th-century American colonial variant, became the single-story, wood-and-concrete "chalet," followed by the post-World War II bungalow, and then a fairly rapid succession of architectural adaptations evolved.

Nostalgia

Although each variation picked up the latest architecture style of its time, each evolution retained a considerable bit of Filipino style and feeling, never coming off the coattails of local tradition.

Filipino members and local architects retained/reported in 2006 as Filipino Modern are best seen in leisure architecture. Hotels, particularly resorts, are the best examples. They require the latest amenities in an architectural style that has traditional feel and character.

Striving to provide the global traveler with a memorable, local experience pooda resort developers to update traditional

FOR THE FILIPINO IN A

TRADITIONAL architecture perfectly lends itself to updating, as this simple gazebo at Bahai Bas Paros shows.

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LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH HOCHENGLO

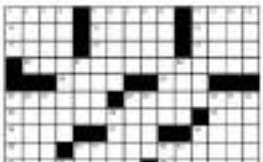
KOKO MACHINE — BY MANOLO ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

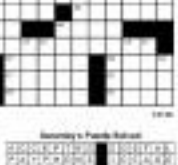
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Classic equipment
6 Pitcher's celebration
10 Laughter sounds
14 Contemporary
15 Punctuation mark
16 Tavern ruler
17 Little Rock's "The"
18 Pierre
19 Micromanagers' meeting
22 Kentucky Derby or Belmont
23 Chicago team
24 King of Pharaoh
25 Medical/law specialty
26 Dance
27 Doesn't
30 Fewer morning
31 Demand for ransom
36 Sense
37 "I" team
38 Bird's nest
40 Chemical compound
41 Hemisphere goes while
47 Industrial ink
48 Miriam's nickname
49 Kentucky Derby event
50 Cutter
51 Hottest on weekend's slate
55 Sounds of amusement
60 Vessels for carrots
61 Pertaining
62 Pull out
63 Hydrogen
64 Actor Jaime
65 Lion joint

DOWN
1 Chopin étude's
2 Cashew or pine
3 Country in the Andes
4 Digging machine
5 Dinner gentleman
6 Double-cross
7 Verbal
8 Bobby's Olympian
9 1931 across
10 Brave
11 Book after Job
12 Sandwich shop
13 Drive
21 Swiss city on the Rhone
28 Actress Lupino
29 Debate side
30 Rhoda
31 Environmental
32 French girl
34 Auctioneer's last word
35 Soccer shot
39 Cobra's cousin
41 Mindless individual
42 Non-verbal communication
43 Preacher
45 Heading toward shore
46 Change
48 Shade weapon
50 Tijuana
51 Farmer's plant
52 Boyfriend
53 Artist's rival
54 Lunch time
56 Behind in arrears
58 Bud ... Mars



Saturday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are naturally loyal and have excellent instincts. You're not one to rush into anything, but when you do commit, you're all in. It's important for you to have loving relationships. You're excellent with finances, both in generating income and saving it. Your true ideal could be one of the kind, honeymoonful pairs of your life! (Years Ag.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You have a wonderful day to help those financial matters in order. It is to yourself personally or you as an employee advancing.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Worry is a way of life for you. Instead of worrying about your future and your finances, do something about it. Make a plan. Start to secure the education of your children as well.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't expect an easy day. You'll need to work hard to get anything done. Stay focused on any task at hand. Don't let yourself be distracted by a challenging day.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Someone older, wiser or more experienced will give you advice today. You might do well to listen. After all, you owe them a) something small.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day for long-range planning. Don't get distracted by short-term issues. Envision your life in five years. Do you know where you want to be? If you don't know now? What do you foresee as the ideal scenario?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Today you're all about your career. Your skills are valuable today. You're willing to do the hard work that is necessary before the fun stuff.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today you have many ideals about shared property. Whether it's your home, insurance matters and the like. Whatever you agree to will be in effect for a long time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your finances and career matters are willing to sit down and discuss your future goals. By all means, get that handled. Make someday you can.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day for work, especially work that requires you to be out and about, patience and endurance. You will get the job done!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're experienced with getting along with many people of all kinds. You might be of your usual self today. Unfortunately, you don't have the time to connect with the people that require it of someone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today you're all about your career. You're willing to do the hard work that is necessary before the fun stuff.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Lovely day. You're all about your career. You're willing to do the hard work that is necessary before the fun stuff.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SuDoKu

By Dave Green

6	2		9	1	5			
8				6		1		
						6	3	
9				5				3
5	1		6		2		9	7
7				4				6
	6	7						
		5		7				1
			8	2	1		6	5

Difficulty Level ▼

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	4	9	6	7	3	1	2	8
2	6	1	9	5	4	3	8	7
7	8	3	1	2	8	5	4	9
8	1	4	7	3	9	6	5	2
9	3	6	5	8	1	7	3	4
3	7	5	4	6	2	8	9	1
6	2	7	3	4	5	9	1	8
1	5	2	8	9	6	4	7	3
4	9	8	3	1	7	2	8	5

Carmencita Aspiras' undiminished greatness

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

IT CERTAINLY WAS A PLEASURE TO HEAR again the fine soprano of Carmencita Aspiras. The venue was the Pale Arts Library, California, an intimate hall perfect for solo recitals.

The recital was Aspiras' seventh. She has gotten quite a sizable following among Americans and Filipinos who are awed by her sensitive playing.

The recital was held in memory of Philippine-born American, Sally Valeria Roelofs, a long-time president of Neighbors Abroad, the cultural sponsor. It is an organization that promotes international and intercultural understanding. The late Roelofs was credited for promoting cultural events of Filipino and American artists.

CARMENCITA Aspiras

The audience was enthralled as Aspiras' clear and luminous tones. She disciplined the confidences of a seasoned performer. Cool, she played without choreographic tremors, the sound she coaxed was enough to define a musical idea and taste.

Be sure, the pianist proved her sentimentalized capability. Bias wrapped her playing, which she delivered with solid dispatch, vividly delineating each section.

The recital mostly of Brahms' Eight Piano Pieces, Op. 76 never excellently recited. She was glorious in Capriccio (No.8), which ended her playing literally with a bang.

All the seven pieces were sensibly rendered. The warmth of a moment of the Intermezzo (No.4) reminded that one was in Hills Also spring, serene (Intermezzo, No. 3) and magical (Capriccio, No.2).

Gershwin's Three Preludes was a veritable tour de force. The rendition was vibrant, bringing out catchy melodic lines and dynamic jazz rhythm that produced a jovial mood.

In the final number—the preludes culled from Rachmaninoff's Twenty four Preludes—Aspiras saw no reluctance somewhat. She brought out the haunting melodies with finesse. The melodic lines were clear, and the embellishments enhancing rather than overpowering.

First played was No.13, whose inherent chaos has made it so popular, followed by number 4, 7, 8 and capped jubilantly by No.2.

Backstage, Ms. Aspiras quipped humbly, "Remember we were, We are getting old." After playing bathed her words. She is still full of energy.

Aspiras was a sought-after pianist in Manila before she emigrated to the US. She took her graduate education at the Vienna Academy of Music, now the Vienna Music University. She has performed in Europe and the US.

In the cocktails that followed, Aspiras greeted her Filipino and American well-wishers.

"The Manila sisters, Maggie, a dentist, Jolene and Nani, use to it that I would not miss the concert, and, therefore, drove me to the venue. To them my sincerest thanks."

CD features voice of Eleanor Calbes, one of the last great divas

By Fabio A. Taviano
Contributor

THE LAST TIME SORSOGO ELEANOR Calbes was heard in Manila was two years ago, at Philamlife Theater with President Macapagal-Arroyo in the audience. She was given a standing ovation worthy of a bubblebuyan.

She repeated the feat in her native Cagayan where music lovers in Tuguegarao City and Aparri (where she was born) witnessed what it took to be a world-class singer.

The first time La Calbes was heard as soloist of the Toronto Symphony, a Canadian critic noted: "One cannot recall anyone singing Strauss's 'Visions of Spring' with such carefree abandon and vocal ease, which is what Eleanor Calbes gave us."

When she left Broadway in the early '70s, her Liu in "Sun's thrills" was called "exhilarating" and her Tuptim in "The King and I" was "a vocal event."

As far as I know, she was the only Filipino singer to have been chosen by Richard Rodgers (of the Rodgers-and-Hammerstein fame) to sing the role of his favorite heroine, and with Leo Isaiongs, Oronzio Gonzaga and Cecile Licad, La Calbes has sung for royalties like Britain's Prince Phillip. She was also one of the first Filipino music exhibitions to guest on "Tonight Show with Johnny Carson."

A long-time resident of Canada, where she had performed in operas, directed musicals and where she continues to teach young singers, Calbes is one of the last great Filipino divas in the league of Conchita Banzon, Delilay Alidio and Evelyn Mandac. Her gorgeous voice is immortalized in a Canadian-made CD, "My Journey to Song," with pianist Helen McBride accompanying her.

The CD is a collection of Filipino songs, opera and art songs. It opens and concludes with sacred songs.

There is unusual fervor and sense of piety in her rendition of Malotte's "The Rosary" and Gounod's "Ave Maria."

Her "Pahimango" (by Asenjo) and "Sayan Ko" (by Constancio de Guzman) are gems of the patriotic romantic. There's fun and humor as she interprets Philippine folksongs like "O Ayat O Mayan nga Diding," and there she shifts back to melancholy as she sings "Dandansoy."

As far as this voice connoisseur is concerned, the crowning glory of Calbes on this CD are Strauss's "Ring" and "Wein Weib und Gesang" and Korngold's "Marietta's Lied." You don't know what ramshackle and hopeless lives are in store are until you hear her in these scenes.

The voice soars without effort and stays uniformly with even more breathtaking effect—it's in the way she caresses words and vocalize that makes the great difference.

Another song to be savored on the Bai CD is the rendition of Gruwelle's "Summertime" (from "Porgy and Bess"). The last few measures are sheer vocal magic and it leaves you with great desire to watch the entire Gershwin opera.

Calbes shares a duet with her sister, Delilia Calbes Antonett, in Santiago's "Sakali Man," and, with her student Gharnavalle Erlinata, in Parodi's "Paolo Angelicus."

Cecile Licad enjoys standing ovation and critical acclaim in Arizona

Her debut video raises in know the vocal odyssey of Eleanor Calbes, her CD is the perfect answer. Call 0686-3304209.

Licad wows Tucson

After her well-received Bach 2 in Germany, pianist Cecile Licad is back in the US for more engagements. She wowed Arizona musicloverys with her performance with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra (TSO) this other Thursday, of Saint-Saens Piano Concerto No. 2.

Critic Catherine Roach of the Arizona Daily Star described Licad's performance as "flawless, exceedingly expressive, virtuosic in degree that boggle the mind. The pianist took our breath away.

"The audience at Thursday's Tucson Symphony Orchestra concert was not alone. The musicians were just as awestruck, watching the Philippine-born pianist with the wonderment you imagine from a child seeing a giraffe for the first time. She is, indeed, high praise because we have seen more than our share of accidental pianists on stage with the TSO. But none in recent memory caused quite the stir Licad, who last played with the orchestra in 1998, did.

"Much of the excitement stems from the piece she played, Saint-Saens' Piano Concerto No. 2. It is a weighty virtuosic behemoth that casts the orchestra as accompanist in the grandest sense."

The 48-year-old Licad, outlined in a red gown, set the tone from the opening notes: Her gestures were grand but not grandiose. Her play was expressive but never boastful. She allowed herself ballistic hand gestures and a few dramatic head tilts, but she never lost sight of the audience bonds filling the hall. Licad deftly executed her immediate translation in the first movement with a gentle grace as the piece moved to the main theme.

"When Licad finished playing, the audience bolted to its feet; there were standing before Licad had a chance to rise from the bench with shouts of 'Bravo!' and 'Brafo!' A few fists even whistled, which is a rare response in the concert hall.

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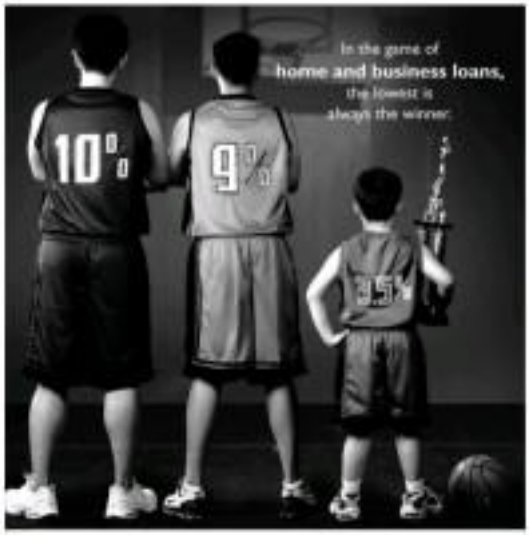
"When Licad finished playing, the audience bolted to its feet; there were standing before Licad had a chance to rise from the bench with shouts of 'Bravo!' and 'Brafo!' A few fists even whistled, which is a rare response in a symphony concert."

Feedback to Zarro' CD

We have good feedbacks from the first buyers of Jonathan Zarro's "Remixing Philippine Art Songs," Isaiah Lim of Ortigas Center described it as "awesome" and Rose Mercer and Dr. Tony Lorenzo called it "deeply beautiful."

Columnist and baritone Nestor Mata said, "It's a fresh musical experience hearing kundiman by Zarro with an extraordinarily rich and smooth voice."

For those who missed the launch of the CD of baritone Zarro and pianist Merlinda Calalang, copies of the CD are available at Philbooked bookstores.



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It was 1979.

Is there a Filipino Modern style?

LATTICES are transparent walls that extend manmade inner spaces to the infinite natural space which surrounds our lives. At right, a mix of recycled antique building material and contemporary construction achieves a traditional, Feng Shui design.

Philippine architecture as an expression of identity. Some establishments design their properties around the Bahay-Kubo with new variations while retaining traditional materials and/or harmless analogies.

The results are great examples of Filipino Modern. Some seem to do justice to this style.

Not all architects can do it well, or can cite it as all. Architects who do this style have taken the time to develop solid understanding of Philippine culture. They learn the architectural vocabulary of their heritage.

Understanding and imbibing heritage is essential because the Modern Filipino style reinterprets in a contemporary manner the architectural traditions—distinctively shaped tile roofs; large window openings; the Filipino's love for veils; highly polished planks of tropical hardwood; wooden cabalo carvings (hardwork) and other trademarks of the traditional Philippine house.

Nostalgia is an impetus in update Filipino traditions. Recycled architectural materials—floors, doors, wooden carvings—are preferred from old structures. These aged details are fitted into the new construction, to give it an old look and feel.

Gene Gonzalez's stunning Cafe Yadao and the late Larry Cruz's cafes pioneered the nostalgia look.

Subliminal comfort

These chairs are designers and architects who eschew old Philippine architectural materials for monolithic concrete pre-the spaces Filipinos have subliminally found comforting.

Those are the spaces described by architecture historian Rodrigo Perez, OSB. He points out the Filipino penchant for layering and transparency, present in the traditional bahay.

As its wearer moves, the garment assumes different forms, a transparent covering changing its shape depending on body movements. There is ambiguity. Which is the main garment, the diaphanous having or the solid skirt underneath?

The same ambiguity exists in architectural spaces. Four posts holding up the second level living space define the space along on the ground level of the bahay-kubo. Although the four posts mark the space, the along itself is neither enclosed by walls nor has it strictly defined boundaries.

People move around different parts of the area by the bahay-kubo during the day, their movement a progression following the sun's course during the day.

Ambiguous layouts

Layouts of Filipino homes could be ambiguous. Traditionally, rooms are multipurpose. A living room by day becomes a sleeping area at night. In other houses, the family hangs out and sleeps in one room, clear the need for large master bedrooms.

In the luxury Tagaytay tradition, interior spaces become transparent through elaborate wooden screens (calado) installed between the upper portion of interior walls and the ceiling. Windows of sliding wooden latticos covered with translucent kapis (Placenta pictensis) diffuse the sun's glare and let in gentle, translucent light.

These examples are some of the architectural features that make Filipinos comfortable, albeit subliminally when they enter a new home.

Even if they have recycled old materials, new architecture that fails to respect these traditions is picturesque but an empty parody of true Filipino Modern architecture.

Great architects, such as National Artist Pablo Antonio, whose career spanned 1910-1112, and Leandro Locsin, whose career spanned 1960-1990, produced sophisticated architecture that could be considered Filipino Modern.

Their architecture, devoid of superficiality, morphed traditional details or architectonic clichés, demonstrated a Filipino response to the global architectural style of their era. There is proof that Filipino Modern has always existed.

Cultural discovery

Only a handful of architects have taken a cultural discovery journey not usually fund in architecture school. They are the select few who have the sensitivity to produce Filipino Modern architecture.

Because Filipino lifestyle constantly evolves, historically there's always been a Filipino Modern style. This style is shaped by personal taste and judgment. Point here exists dispute.

With around 86 million Filipinos today, expect 86 million highly individualistic interpretations of Filipino Modern.

It should be an interesting task to document the Filipino Modern in a book...Filipino social history seen through contemporary architecture.

Feedback is welcome at pride.pivot@gmail.com

Luneta Park stages 'Tupada Revolt'

TUPADA ACTION AND MEDIA Art presents its 5th international art event, "Tupada Revolt," April 25, 1 p.m., with performances by local and international artists at Rizalingan ng Lahing, Luneta Park.

The event then travels to Dagupan City for simultaneous art events in CM, City Mall, City Plaza, Burgos Street and Bonifacio Beach on April 26-28.

Tupada started in 2002 with ambush performances by artists from diverse disciplines in various public spaces, exposing the masses to creative articulations where they themselves were located—on an overpass, open parks, streets, cafés, beaches and alternative art spaces.

It has since grown into an art collective organizing international performance events, creating connections with local and foreign artists in the spirit of unconditional sharing, free-for-service exchange, and molding concepts, directions and personalities together to create an independent ground for art-expressing concerns.

Invited national performance artists Aeng Ang, Liu Chengyang (China); Mary Babcock (Hawaii); Wen Yao Chiang (Korea); Nicola Frangione (Italy); Kano Fukushima, Yosuke Kitagawa, Azuma Kawada, Shuhei Kimura, Hanako Nemoto, Yuji Shimada (Japan); Kim Gwang Cheol, Kim Ji Hee (Korea); Slow Tan, Phyo Min (Myanmar); Art Grabowski, Barrick Lubadowitz, Artie Tyler (Poland); Juliana Yuan (Singapore); Rodriana Fiscus (Switzerland); and Shih-Cheng Cheng (Taiwan) have been invited to participate in this event.

Filipino artists include Butch Bacolor, Bugsy Arden, Sherwin Cirello, Bobby Chieg, Jhay Cobs, Axel Doloritas, Noel Sobe Cutaran, Dagupan Artists Circle, Thom Dimpalog, Mark David, Bert de Guzman, Hayer de Mesa, Rommel Estipona, Mark Louis Gonzalez, Vim Nadera, Kaye O'Rik, Sean Mar'O Ocampo, Pangasinan Art Group, Ami Polines, Ariel Samaniego and Socialista Boys, Cristine Sison, Gabi Suarez, Constantino Gravelli, Anthony Taladro, Wire Tuason, Manuel Villacilla.

All events are free and open to the public.

Call 4286387 or 0915-3982047, e-mail tupada.ph@gmail.com.

Pangasinan culture

LINAMUAN SA IMAMO, Bersolita at Anos (Lire), NBCB Book Club and Dagupan Bonifacio Library present "Pangasinan: Kultura at Panulatan" April 26, 10 a.m., in Dagupan Bonifacio Library, 3/F City Hall Building, Dagupan (or Mayaya Avenue, Pasig City.

The lecture on Pangasinan culture and poetry will feature the book "Malagilan: Sonnets on Villanelles" by Santiago Villafania.

Guest speakers are Cirilian Nebrada Flores of the University of the Philippines, an expert in Pangasinan language, geography, arts and culture; and the author. Admission is free (0921-4598340).

EARTH DAY 2008

LEARNING

Lilia Chelo Bunal Formoso

In this issue
Graduation stories / F2-3
What I've learned / F4

INQUIRER IN EDUCATION

Every breath we take, every move we make

An Earth Day lesson plan

EARTH DAY IS CELEBRATED ON APRIL 22 of every year. Throughout the world, events and activities are planned to mark this special day designed for all of us to be aware that planet Earth, which is our home, is in danger.

Around Earth Day, the newsmen makes a special effort to print news stories about the environment. But the issues does not wait for Earth Day to publish stories that talk about environmental problems and/or solutions. It comes out with such news whenever necessary. Examples are the recent stories on the construction of two concrete towers right in the middle of a forest preserve near Subic.

This lesson plan is designed to make young students aware of how everyday things and occurrences can impact on our planet's increasing deterioration. The waste materials that we do not reuse or recycle can pollute the air, land and sea. Chemicals that are released in the atmosphere by our air conditioners, refrigerators, cars and other modern day wonders are causing global warming. With the world getting warmer, sea levels are rising, weather conditions are changing, glaciers are vanishing, habitat and species are being destroyed, and food production is declining.

In this lesson, Grades 4-7 students will use content in the lessons to explore environmental issues, causes and effects. This study guide touches on basic language skills and encourages analytical and critical thinking.

Teachers who want to use the lessons in their classrooms, e-mail [illegible] or call [illegible]. For DepEd-approved seminar-workshops on Earth Day, contact your DepEd school coordinator or teaching head. — CBF

Today's lesson

Objective:

Students will express opinions about how items or stories found in the newspaper affect the environment.

Materials:

Copies of the lessons, copies of the Activity Sheet

Procedures:

1. Discuss the ways that the Earth is in danger. Whatever the grade level and the students' abilities, take time to define terms and review basic facts about the Earth. Inform the class that with so many people in the world using so much, the planet's natural resources may be used up sooner than we are ready for it. In addition, the air, the land and the seas are being polluted by what we use and how we use things at home, in school, in business—everywhere.

2. Tell the class that Earth Day was started as a movement in 1970 in the United States primarily to call attention to pollution and other problems plaguing the environment. It became a global campaign in 1990, resulting in [illegible] nature, issues and recycling ways to save the Earth from turning into one big landfill and to prevent global warming.

3. Select a news story from the lessons that concerns the environment. The subject of the story can be positive (such as recycling) or negative (such as pollution). Share the story with the class, then ask the students to identify what the effects are on the air that we breathe, the water that we drink, the land where we grow food, and the Earth as a whole.

4. Distribute the copies of the lessons and ask students to scan the newspaper and find stories, services or products that have an impact on the environment. These items may be found in stories and advertisements in the newspaper (example: a car has an effect on the air and possibly the land and the water if grease is spilled and seeps into the ground and the water supply).

5. Instruct students to complete their worksheets using the items they have selected. Walk around the classroom and provide assistance as needed.

6. Ask the students to share their completed worksheets with the class and to discuss possible solutions.

Extension:

Encourage the students to develop a plan of action for a volunteer class group called Earth Patrol to help cut down waste in the classroom, in the school, at home and in the community.

Activity Sheet

Good, service or product	Page no.	Effect(s) on the air we breathe, the water we drink and/or the land where we grow food

Who will check the test papers?

TWO MONTHS AFTER THE DEPARTMENT of Education's Accreditation and Equivalency at A & E test was conducted by the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS), the test papers have yet to be reviewed.

BALS Director Carolina Guerrero has assured the bureau's department was attending to the problem. The bureau has been receiving numerous queries which is not surprising since 90,000-plus elementary and high school dropouts nationwide took the A & E.

The problem started last month when the DepEd's Rule and Awards Committee required the building cost of the processing of the A & E tests.

For several years now, according to a BALS report, the nongovernment Center of Educational Measurement has been processing, analyzing and scoring the test.

Education Undersecretary for Finance and Administration Teodoro Jungil Jr. said they were "fast tracking the bidding so we can have the test results before the opening of classes."—DEB

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Music education-workshop

THE NATIONAL Music Education Seminar-Workshop on "Integrative and Cross-Cultural Approaches and Materials in Teaching Music" for elementary and secondary teachers and school administrators will be held April 23-25 at the Mini-Gen Elegnos Auditorium, Education Building, University of Santo Tomas, Espana, Manila. The workshop is organized by the Philippine Society for Music Education (PSME). Registration fee is P2,500. Regular registration is on April 23, 7 a.m. Call Professor Noelia A. Zabala, 967-2971; Professor Betty Bernabe, 926-1083(P), 731-4822 (FAX), 2917-0999/672, and K.B. 0917-4547137.

Passing on the luck

By John L. Silva

A young man graduates from FEU on a scholarship borne out of a promise to a father

THROUGH THE YEARS, I'VE HAPPILY ATTENDED many of Far Eastern University's lectures, openings, and performances.

The university's 60th commencement exercise this April was, to me, the most beautiful of all the events. Our scholar, Ramon Quiling, was graduating, and my partner Jonathan Bret and I were there as his adoptive parents.

There was courage for several hours, a woman of tassels and gowns and the school color green but, where Ramon's journey was called and he stands the platform to receive his diploma, the moment went into slow motion for me. Like every parent in that huge auditorium, I felt that measure of tears and happiness for our graduate.

Ramon was introduced into our household by Glenn. His first cousin and graduate from Emilio Aguinaldo College, Glenn was responsible for finding another suitable candidate from his province of Zamboanga who would work for us one year as a houseboy. If all went well and there was a desire for college, he would become the next scholar.

Pondering the world

Ramon graduated from a science high school so he came to our lives not with any usual leanings but more with a cautious, academic intent. He wanted "the world," while he pondered the distance Rizal the bird in the morning, life is also of the Iglesia ni Cristo faith and is possessed of a discipline and an outlook to succeed here's of fashion.

After a year's service I told Ramon to choose whatever university he wished to enter. He chose FEU without any prodding. He had visited various schools but loved the serenity of the FEU campus, the friendliness of the students, and the competence of its faculty. When he entered the same feelings I have had about the university these many years. I knew this event was worth my investment and time.

Ramon was my fourth college scholar and was lucky, for I had turned pragmatic and less demanding. My previous scholars got a clear theme: You get a scholarship only if you digest, in blood, how to learn for each stressful after graduation.

After a decade though of providing scholarships and realizing the cruel's pace by which the job seekers was expanding, I relented, and told Ramon his life's destination was his own after graduation.

Unremitting idealism

To our surprise, he decided to major in Psychology and not the scholastic courses that would have been his ticket abroad. In fact, he has never bothered to us a desire to leave the country. I had become the cynic, while he, with FEU's unremitting idealism, seems to have ingrained in him the possibility of creating a future here.

Since Jonathan and I espouse an American egalitarian philosophy in the midst of a troubled society, Ramon and the rest of our household scholars experienced a dual relationship with us. They did everything demanded of house help but less so many occasions, they sat at the dinner table with us, eating the best, learning manners, holding English conversations, and realizing their own worth and dignity.

Ramon revelled in the democracy of our home and I suspect that FEU had much to do with the self-confidence he brought in the table. He was his own strong-willed person and his experiences of thanks...for the baller tickets, the summer camps, the delightful dinners...were always simple but decent. It was refreshing to take a young man under my wing without the cloying gratitude or feigned cheerfulness that some use (debt of gratitude) extort.

Ramon mastered the university's electronic library and developed strong friendships, acutely aware of the network advantages here on. In his senior year, I offered to help find on the job-training from friends who had companies but he demurred and got it himself. I sense he still need little or no help when he goes out there pounding the streets for his first job. FEU has given him that spark.

First in family

Ramon, like many of the graduates cheerily clutching at their diplomas that day, seemed ready to take a major in life and become the backbone of a good society are earnestly need. For Ramon, the first in his family line to graduate from college, poverty is no longer his background too.

After his graduation, I went by myself to the American cemetery in Makati. My soldier/father is not buried there but I remember him vividly in that tranquil place. I thought about how he got his lucky break, in the 1930s.

Dad, having graduated from high school, left his poor Ilocandia town and boarded a ship bound for California. He worked the length of that town and, depending on the harvest, picked apples up worth and vegetables down south. But he seemed so badly to grow college.

One day while praying in church hoping to find some way to go to school, a priest named Father Alchemy approached him, heard his confession. He invited him to a professor friend at San Francisco State College. The professor, who was clubbed, agreed to help. Dad through college in return for being his manservant.

My dad's life changed with that diploma. Forever grateful to the school, Dad made one middle name "Anthony" And while growing up, he never made me forget to pass on his "luck" to someone else.

Dad would have been proud to see his "luck" continued through Ramon and even more so through FEU. Dr. Nicanor Reyes, FEU's founder, started the school as a night college to allow working people to study and obtain a diploma.

Ramon's career path and future are set. My father's dream to pass on his "luck" has been fulfilled. And with the venerable university's 80th commencement, a founder's wishes continue.

John Silva is a trustee of Synergeia, an education reform organization which raises academic achievement levels in children through teacher training.

RAMON'S Quiling has never indicated interest to leave the country.

ROLL CALL

OLFU's award-winning researches

THE RESEARCH and Development Center (RDC) at Our Lady of Fatima University (OLFU), has received prospects for and conduct... at more than 500 studies since it was established in 2003. Research papers were submitted to local and international forums and received awards from various institutions. The paper "Vitamin D Receptor Gene Polymorphism and Postmenopausal Osteopenia with Prostate Cancer," for instance, won first prize in the 19th Philippine Society of Medical Oncology (PSMO) annual convention. It was later presented in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The center, established to motivate students and faculty members to submit research proposals for funding, is headed by director Rennyla A. Ballaseli, RN, MD. Also in the center is Junel Nuevo, RMT, PhD(c), assistant director and chair of the College of Medical Technology. Interested researchers may call 2832732-08 loc 119.

Miriam's program on aging

MIRIAM College's Department of Psychology is offering a six-day certificate program on the Fundamentals of Gerontology, Production and Exercise Aging, May 12-23, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Dr. Miriam Thomas (SIBT) Room. The program will cover aging, demography of the Filipino elderly adult, psycho-social stages of development, nutrients and screening of aging, bio-medical aspects, etc. Program fee is P45,000. Those who will register before April 30, will get a 20 percent discount. Senior citizens get an additional 20 percent discount. Call 9806400 local 113/451115, e-mail mmt@slibrre.edu.ph, or visit www.mc.edu.ph.

UP LAW HOMECOMING

UP Law '82 board recently the UP Law Grand Alumni Homecoming at the University of the Philippines College of Law in Diliman. Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno was the keynote speaker. Class '82 co-chairs Ms. Pi L. Limlingan (right) of reinventing the college's Malcolm Theater. It also produced the first coffee table book about the college, "UP College of Law: A Bit of History," as part of the celebration of the college's centenary in 2011. The class also organized a series of sporting events.

O.B. MONTESSORI STUDENT IS CONTEST RUNNER-UP

Elvira Jill Chan, a food management student of O.B. Montessori College, was first runner-up in the recent National Bistro Bee Competition at the EDSA Shangri-La Mall. The competition, part of the annual Japanese Mikonga Fiesta, aimed to encourage culinary creativity among Filipinos through the use of indigenous Filipino ingredients for the Japanese-themed... O.B. Montessori College offers Bachelor in Food Management, Bachelor in Early Childhood Education, and Bachelor in Elementary Preschool Education. Enrollment is ongoing. O.B. Montessori College is at #3 Bonifacio St. Greenhills, San Juan, 7229128 local 140.

CEU Malolos is number 1 in Region 3

CENTRO Escolar University Malolos ranked first among Central Luzon universities and colleges in the Allied Medicine Licensure Examination rating. Passing rate for pharmacy was 91 percent, nursing, 85 percent, and dentistry, 100 percent. The Philippine Board of Pharmacy and the Professional Regulatory Commission presented in 2007 a plaque of excellence to the Pharmacy department for being second only to the University of the Philippines. CEU Malolos' passing rate in the nursing exam was higher than the national ratio of 48 percent. Similarly graduates Dr. Beverly Jane Bonifacio are in the top 5 in the December board exam.

Forum on open education set

PHILIPPINE Commons, in collaboration with Ateneo University Law School and Virtual Foundation Inc., presents the Philippine Open Education Forum on "Are We Ready and Where Are We?", April 23, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., at Ateneo University School of Law in Pasay City.

The forum will discuss the concept of open education, how it can be applied in the Philippines, and the efforts by government and private organizations to promote it.

Educators, proponents of open source educational materials and publishers are invited to attend. The seminar is free.

Contact lawyer Gem Guerrero at 8921-6773831 or e-mail gem.nico@mydev.ph.

UE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

Vice President Hali de Castro Jr. inducted new office new officers of the University of the East Alumni Association Inc. (UEAAI). The new officers are Prof. Mercy L. Cambaris, president; Edgar Arcilla, vice president; formerly P. Cos, secretary; Jessbrith Mahinay, treasurer; lawyer Wilson O. Soriano, public relations officer; Norberto Victa Reyes, auditor (L to r). Col. Renato S. Chan, business manager; and directors Milagros Rodrigues, Ferdinand Figueroa, Dr. Brenda S. Diaz, and lawyer Rosario S. Bernaldo. Jose T. Sinchiaco Sr. is adviser. Dr. Castro was named one of 48 outstanding alumni during UE's 48th Foundation Anniversary-Diamond Jubilee in 2006.

Executives' choice

ASIAN top business executives and entrepreneurs have enrolled in AIME's globally oriented MBA and PhD in Management/Political Economy. They include Bernardino Paco, president, Diamalto Manufacturing Corp.; Annie Tan-Yee, chair-CEO, Cenadro Motors Corporation; Michael Williams, president, Chem-CEO, Herbert Cookes Port Terminal; and Henry Sy, president, Toyota Manila Bay. AIME is at the first Station Intramuros Tower, 1081 Metropolitan Avenue, San Antonio Village, Makati City. Tel. 8962350/58, e-mail bschool@aimeo.edu.ph, fax 8962351, website www.aimeo.edu.ph.

CLASS ACT

Inspiring trip
Brian Billy H. Pintero, a sophomore Nursing student at the Mariano Marcos State University in Batac, Ilocos Norte, was in this photo taken in Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, with the town's Catholic church as background. During the first semester of school year 2007-2008, 12 students in his Humanities class took a trip around Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte that "allowed us to draw inspiration from Ilocano artists and preserved an interest in learning their craft." That's Brian in a brown T-shirt. "I have been reading the Ilocano since I was a junior in high school," he writes.

'Radio-active' education teaches Aetas 3Rs

Text & photos by Ma. Concrit Daya

AETA WOMEN SCOOP SHOVEL-der wraps and mats in G-strings solemnly kept in step with the grand march from the open Nalsa. "A basis descended as they filed into the Alberto Magsaysay Auditorium of the University of Santo Tomas (UST).

April 8 was graduation recognition day for 146 adults from Tarlac and Pampanga who finished UST's Distance Education Program for Marginalized Communities conducted via two-way radio broadcasts.

Aeta learn distance education in Filipino as pag-aaral sa radyuhan.

Tears and cheers punctuated the day. Pelalipat lupa... Aeta sobbing and clapping —overwhelmed in the hall.

The program first began in 2003 with a pilot class of 33 Aeta and one Ayeagbit Ashanti women in Sitio Malanca now in Bo Aeta community in Bamban, Tarlac near Mount Pinatubo, and in Pampanga.

Three Rs

The modules teach reading, writing and numeracy. Functional literacy, in other words, that would open a whole new world for Aetas that have not attended school. This means learning how to count money, read documents, prescription and road signs, tell time, write letters, vote, sign one's name, know one's date of birth, etc.

With much humor, class administrator Tina Sumwang, 38, recalled how he ended in the wrong place because he could not read the signs on the jeepneys. "Nina I could say Ihaw-Ihaw in Malaysia," he proudly announced.

Although Tina Sedot, 36, finished high school, she attended the program to boost her self-confidence. "I am no longer shy," said this day-care teacher and mother of six who is married to the elder's chieftain.

Why were the majority of graduates women (about 75 to 117 The municipally idled away but when they realized their efforts were learning, they joined in provided they had their separate sessions.

NEAR: Sandoso harvests her rootals.

Learners are divided into two groups...readers and non-readers or section 1 and section 2. Five communities with 18 centers are assisted by 30 trained local para-teachers (multi-purp).

Teaching and learning are related to the learners' everyday lives. The program uses modules that deal with topics such as environmental conservation, livelihood, health and reproductive parenthood and community life. Filipino is the medium of instruction.

Why use two-way radio in this age of high-speed communication? Program coordinator Evelina Alipao said, although Tarlac and Pampanga are only about three hours from Manila, Aeta communities had no electricity. Computers and video conferencing cannot be used.

A radio classroom of all learning centers in three-hour hours before classes begin. When they are ready to begin, para-teachers tell the main station in UST.

The main teacher introduces the topic for discussion and presents a question for the listeners to reflect on. This pauses also function for opening minutes. At some point, literacy and numeracy components are introduced.

Learners may be asked, for instance, to conduct an inventory of trees in their community. The teacher may then ask them which tree or plant has a name that begins with the letter "B" or the syllable Ba. Para-teachers help in these exercises. Tom on knot gives...lessons, each lasting one and a half hours, are held twice a week.

Para-teacher Lucy Dayo, 43, recalled that once, when the students came to practice writing their names, a development worker asked Mr. Alipoang flying what she had learned. The learner answered: "Aba, sir, nabalitaan ko na ang Bandana at Angelina." (Sir, I can now read Bandana and Angelina.)

And why these two places? Her answer in Filipino: "Sa dun at lam ko may relatives doon. I don't have to take along my grandchild, and I no longer need to ask what is written on the jeep."

On several occasions, when they had to enroll their children, they were offered a stamp pad so they could affix their thumbprints on forms. They proudly declined and signed their names as their mothers have learned.

And there was the case of Norberto Hanapi (that's his name indeed) who lived in a place with no learning center because of poor radio reception. Undaunted, he attended classes in nearby sitio, an hour's walk away.

Why did he persevere? "It's hard to be a leader if you do not know how to read and write," he said.

Every point

The classroom is not confined with in four walls. Learning takes place outside through lakbay aral or field trips. Quipped a mountain-dweller who went to the sea for the first time: "The sea is indeed salty."

But distance education is not just about the three Rs. It is also an entry point for community development. The program, under UST's Office of Community Development headed by Prof. Jose A. Cruz III, has also delivered free modules on Zoilloism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Aglipayanism and Iglesia ni Cristo.

Graduation day might as well have been also recognition day for the pioneering educators, engineers and developmental workers who brought learning to the dump.

It was the first and only one of its kind in the Philippines, said Dr. Evelyn A. Songco, founder of UST's Distance Learning Program. Engineer Cas Hernandez tearfully acknowledged the Aetas' pedalpal-lurya. Program coordinator and emcee Alipao (Ah Pao'o) fervently deemed a G string for the big day.

The Aetas wanted their achievements to be acknowledged in a formal ceremony. And on each of the 146 graduates had his/her moment on stage. Many received medals for special achievements—from perseverance to self-confidence to artwork and cooking.

Sister Sandoso received four medals. Berly Gonzales of Sitio Sibling, close valedictorian or outstanding mag-aaral, delivered the valedictory address.

But with UST Rector Fr. Roberto de la Costa, OP, toasting the graduates, every one was a outstanding mag-aaral that day.

A teacher should balance firmness with kindness

"KIDS TODAY ARE SO SWEET," LAMENTS Ms Reyes, a high school teacher who does not name her first name published. "They always chat in class, and not about the lesson. They talk in loud voices, and it's difficult to control them. Pls write for they don't do well. Missing discipline subject"

Discipline is an ugly word in most of us. It connotes rigidity, punishment and pain. But real discipline promotes learning and guidance. Without it, society will not function well.

Therapist Jane Nelsen says positive discipline is a balance between firmness and kindness, promoting respect for adults and children. Positive discipline is not permissive or punitive. It gives people skills to become productive. In her book "Positive Discipline A to Z," written with colleagues Lynn Lott and H. Stephen Glenn, Nelsen shares four principles:

Queena N. Lee-Chua

Be kind but firm.

The positive teacher yells at the class, "Shut up and listen to me! Take out your books and do not say a word until the bell rings!" This tactic may work only for one period, a few minutes, or not at all. Students resent this; some may rebel and run riots, and many will likely lose respect for the teacher.

The permissive teacher throws her hands up in the air. "Do whatever you want. Anyway it's your grades and your life." While students may enjoy this, the truth is they will not learn a thing. Moreover, the teacher ends up feeling drained and frustrated.

The kind and firm teacher says, "You are here to learn, and to help our another grow. I care for you, and as your teacher, it is my responsibility to help you develop your talents to long as you are in class, you need to respect me as I respect you. When you talk, I listen. When I talk, I expect you to listen, too. If you have something to say, raise your hands, and I promise to give you a chance to air your views."

Decide what to do, then do it.

"We need to learn to change ourselves instead of trying to control others and make them change," says Nelsen. When we focus on trying to change our behavior, we realize that actions should follow words, and we have to walk the talk.

Many teachers threaten and nag, but never demonstrate proper behavior. We need to step back and decide on the best course of action.

Ms Reyes finds herself repeating instructions and homework all the time because students chat and miss half of what she says. At the end of the day, she is exhausted.

Nelsen and her co-authors suggest the following tactic: Ms Reyes can announce calmly to her students that she will make sure she has their full attention before saying anything, but that she will only say things twice at the most. She can repeat (as many times as needed) examples of directions (difficult lessons, but for every-day stuff, she will only say things once).

This process will need some adjustment, and it will not be easy at first. The moment the class quiets down, the teacher can talk about the forthcoming test, but when students ask her to repeat things for the third time, she can look at her watch and say, "Sorry, I promised that I would not repeat myself. You need to pay more attention." Soon her class will have no choice but to listen attentively.

This is positive discipline at work—instead of nags and threats, calm rational actions work better.

Replace punishment with information.

Punishment seldom works. It provides an outlet for anger and gives the illusion of control, but it does not make students learn well because it uses fear as a motivator.

Here are alternatives to punishment:

When two kids are fighting, mediate. Few teachers threaten, "Go to the principal's office. You will get a suspension!" It is better to separate them and say, "Now let's get to the root of the problem. Why are you fighting?"

When a student fails to submit homework, the positive teacher threatens, "If you don't submit the assignment, you will not pass the course." An effective teacher asks if something is stopping the student from doing homework. She will say, "Homework makes you master the lesson. You have a choice. During recess, I will guide you as you do the required work. Or you can promise to submit the homework tomorrow."

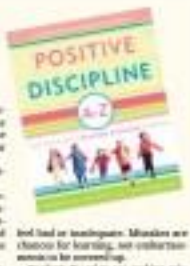
Learn from mistakes.

No one is perfect, certainly not kids and teens. When students make mistakes, good teachers do not make them feel bad or inadequate. Mistakes are chances for learning, not embarrassments to be covered up.

Students "need to see making mistakes as an opportunity to get valuable help from others," says the authors. "It means they are willing to be accountable, which is a necessary step in using mistakes as an opportunity to learn."

Discipline is not to be avoided, but learned and practiced with firmness, kindness, and care.

"Positive Discipline A to Z," by Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott and H. Stephen Glenn, is recommended not just for teachers, but parents, counselors, and all who care for our children. It is available at Powerbooks. Call 7576426 or e-mail dial@powerbooks.com.ph.



I am finally positive I want to learn outside the classroom

Sara O. Siguion-Reyna

Assignment: DepEd

There's a right way to handle the flag

By Jerry E. Esplanada

A NATIONWIDE DRIVE TO TEACH the proper handling and use of the Philippine flag kicked off recently with an orientation seminar in Baguio, Dagupan for the Northern Luzon cluster.

A similar program is scheduled for the Southern Luzon cluster.

Flag advocacy seminars will also be held in Palo, Leyte (Visayas cluster), and Malaybalay, Cagayan de Oro City and Davao City (Northern and Southern Mindanao and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao cluster).

Some 6,000 public school teachers handling Music, Makabayan, Values Education, English and Filipino subjects, as well as school administrators, will be ordered on the proper conduct of flag raising and retreat ceremonies. They, in turn, will conduct echo seminars in their respective divisions," said Education Assistant Secretary for Special Projects Jesusfrancis E. Malaya.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus has issued a set of guidelines on the proper use of the flag, bolstering its role as a "symbol of the country's sovereignty and unity."

In DepEd Order no. 80, Lapus directed all field offices to "strengthen respect and allegiance to the Philippine flag by banning canned music during flag ceremonies and prohibiting the use of tattered or faded flags in all schools and offices."

Citing RA 8491, Lapus also asked DepEd offices to "monitor and ensure strict compliance with the order and institute appropriate sanctions on erring institutions or personnel ..."

Sanctions include fines ranging from P5,000 to 20,000 and jail terms of up to one year or both. For private schools, violators can cause cancellation of their recognition and permit to operate.

Citing RA 8491, Lapus warned against "prohibited acts" involving the flag. They include:

- Mutilating, defacing or committing acts on the flag.
- Dipping the flag in salute or compliment to persons or object.
- Using the flag as a drapery, festoon, tablecloth, covering for ceilings, walls, seats and other objects, pennant to the hood or other parts of motor vehicles, and trademark for commercial or industrial design.
- Printing the flag in wheels or in part as a costume or uniform.
- Printing or attaching representation of the flag on handkerchiefs, napkins, cushions and other articles of merchandise.
- Using the flag as display or part of any advertisement or informercial

Lapus said "our flag deserves respect which our students, both from public and private schools, should keep in mind as an early age."

DepEd's flag advocacy campaign is part of the National Flag Day (May 28) and Independence Day (June 12) festivities.

What I've learned

Getting there my own way

I GREW UP ON MAMAS STORIES of the anti-Marcos days and her activities: running in her dogs to flee truncheon-wielding Metrocom troopers, bringing home the red flag of the Diliman Commune after a Malcbalo march (she wanted a draped on the window, my grandmother named it into a pillowcase) and, after Sept. 21, 1972, distributing underground newspapers, attending underground political discussions, doing this and that in the name of democracy.

Papa, light years away from his own "redeeming," got arrested one night for refusing one line. He would not tell the police that he was the dictator minister's nephew, or he and his friends needed the ceramic lots of Camp Crame.

Times have changed. While in the "Marcos" students were presumably anti-Marcos, now the youth is divided: border ge on the streets to protest but an equal number believe the status quo cannot be an issue, should not be undone, so why bother to make it?

We are going through our own Gilded Age. We are caught between pretending all is well for the sake of our material concerns, and fighting for what we feel is right, no matter the consequences.

This is the story of my life in the shadow of my family's political pontifications.

The swollen ankle

During the censorship debates towards the end of the century, my parents and grandmother were branded pro-anti-phies for clutching freedom of expression and daring to depict the swollen side of Philippine society.

I was in a small, predominantly Catholic school in Alabang. My classmates taunted me whenever my title was quoted in media, sure at times even threw a nasty name at her, with smoke coming out of her ears.

In a current events talk on the first Friday of the month set aside for non-Catholic service, the pastor urged us all to listen carefully in the issue in order to make our own informed decisions. Almost every hand swung towards my brother and me. To my panicked grade school mind, it seemed they had decided we were better as "a" presidency."

Fast forward to a couple of years later. President Joseph Estrada's impeachment plagued the nation, with fellow it is not less nation of its predecessor. Everyone in school knew my family's position: solid support over what his former "allies" deserved him.

Through our messages, students were asked to be in black to demonstrate the movement against him. In defiance, I dressed in white; my brother wore a step further and wore orange. He was, except my real friends, spoke to me that day; a boy I thought I liked liked me and spat out, "Disgusting!" I wondered what would happen if I wanted to bend 360 degrees.

In seven years, there have been rallies and demonstrations where my parents and my grandmother were rain-gassed or doused with water-on live television. My mother is a lone star because cancer survivor and my grandmother is unable to walk without scans, but only on the streets they roam — and still.

The barricade

Then there was the Nov. 29 Manila Peninsula incident last year when my mother, a curious onlooker, was arrested.

You watch the television coverage of the events as it unfolds. You do not quite know what to make of the police's sending an armored car through the hotel's front door. You know your mother is inside. And then you see her on TV, talking about not wanting to be killed just by snores.

In a while, you get a call. "Hello, I have been arrested. Please do your homework and don't forget to submit your college application essays on your quickest convenience."

She was released after 36 hours for "humanitarian reasons." The first thing she did when she got home was order a cheeseburger, "so that they pick me up again." I told me I knew what to say.

But like that afternoon I had screamed something Papa's documentary on Ver/Enrile. Someone my age talked about how soldiers shot her parents. I instinctively felt I had no right to complain.

I went to school on the following Monday. After a flight but after conversation with the counselors in the high school department, my guidance counselor and my history teacher about the weekend events, I prepared to dialogue with classmates, only to discover silence.

Some refused to give an opinion, others merely echoed their parents thoughts: I did not expect them to grab over me, or ask, "Hi! — the f— was your mother doing there?" I thought they would at least ask what brought that about.

Three seasons

A couple of months passed when some Bukidnon Lumads, in Sinai, rallies again. With my family, I went to a Hugo one attended mostly by young people. Some body took my picture and it was published two days later, the caption talking about three seasons — my grandmother, my mother, and I.

I got ribbed in school but I did not mind. I did not expect my friends to share my feelings about the 27th anniversary which me talked about at home over breakfast, boyfriend dinner. I figured we all had different experiences and they would not have similar respect.

Then I asked myself. Did I truly want to learn outside the classroom or was I like my classmates, moving only through my parents' eyes, confined by what they said or did?

I was not sure of the answer until the Monday marking the Fall of Bataan. My parents ordered my son and took me to the grounds of "Corruption.com," a dictionary of words used in current practices, published by the Center for People Empowerment in Governance.

I was not in the mood. I sulked most of the way.

At the fourth floor of the Popular Bookstore on Timog Avenue, the events turned the young woman — not one man — unknown, who were about my age or slightly older. They researched under the heat of last year's summer to the new, corrupt meanings of old words. They raided a mixed bag of cops, agents, operators, fixers, office-drivers, lawyers, small-time businessmen and government employees shooting the terms.

One of the publishers said the researcher/editors should be the successors of ours. "What I did last summer" essays for the western jazz mixed diary, conditioned by the praise.

When the launch was over, they approached with knowing nonchalance to the audience and had their pictures taken with them, as if the celebrities were the ones who had done something important.

I was humbled by their manner of fast dance.

The future

Up close and face-to-face with the "real deal," I realized I was betting in my non-formable exercise. Compared to the young women there, I have no clear ideals.

All of a sudden I get scared. What if, while studying abroad I lose what little orientations I have, hand with the stereotypes one is sure to encounter in the First World? Will I look at my country the same way I do now? Or shall I see it from the "global" perspective, whatever that gets to mean four years from?

Papa always said he found out what it was like to be only Filipino in the four years he lived away from home. I hope it will be the same for me, but how?

Manila away from the college life I have long anticipated, I have not fully decided what I want in life. Some days I want to be the teacher Sister Wilhelmina, in my primer dismay. There are weeks I aspire to be the next Christiane Amanpour. When I do, Mama and Papa relish the prospect of having their daughter dodge bullets.

But thanks to my chance meeting with the "Unexplainers" years, I am finally positive I want to learn outside the classroom, not to be merely pro-this or anti-that, or to march on the streets and roll for the end of a self-serving regime.

I want to learn things without being spoon-fed, to go somewhere, according to how I want to get there.

It is going to be quite a walk.

Footnotes

Charge tuition fees and win back what you paid

DAYDREAMERS would not want to miss Citibank's special treat this coming school year. This time, it's for their children's tuition with their Citibank credit cards and not back the amount.

Citibank PayLite's "Win What You Charge" raffle promotion is ongoing until June 30. No interest is charged for PayLite three-month payment terms at Asian Institute of Management, Cebu Doctors's College, Integrated Children's Activity Center/Montessori, B.I.S., D.E. Montessori Greenhills, St. Mary of the Woods School, St. Paul's College of Pasig, University of Asia & the Pacific, and University of Santo Tomas.

They can also enjoy affordable add-on rates for longer installment schedules, up to 24 months, when they use Regular PayLite to pay for their children's tuition at participating schools.

Cardholders can use PayLite for tuition starting at P3,000. Each PayLite transaction will earn one raffle entry for a chance to be one of eight lucky cardholders to win as much as P25,000 cash credits.

Citibank PayLite is a reinstallment available to all Citibank cardholders. It allows Citibank cardholders to choose convenient payment terms, from three to 24 months.

Call the 24-hour Citiphone at 8988888 in Metro Manila, 2148888 in Metro Cebu, or visit www.citibank.com.ph.

Going green: Shop for 'low-carb' school supplies

DHOOING pads and notebooks based on wilderness and woodborne is already a thing of the past. Global warming has made people go "green."

Think tree lifestyle and the choices they make, including school notebook to use.

Today's Earth inhabitants are only stewards borrowing resources from the future generations. While Earth is continuously serving and providing a man-produce notebook, they have the responsibility to make the planet a better place.

They cannot save Earth all at once, but they can do a little bit at a time. They have to be conscious about how much paper each person they use and have to learn to use less and recycle more. With recycling, fewer trees are cut down. Even young people, particularly students, can do these little things and start making a difference.

Here are some recycling facts:

- Forty percent of solid waste consist of paper and paperboard products.
- Each ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees.
- Each ton of recycled paper saves over three cubic yards of landfill space.
- Each ton of recycled paper requires 7,000 fewer gallons of water to manufacture than virgin paper.
- Each ton of recycled paper uses 4,100 kilowatt per hour less energy to produce than virgin paper.
- Recycling paper from pulp and chemicals means 74 percent less air pollution and 35 percent less water pollution.
- Recycling generates jobs and revenue. It also conserves less land is sent to landfills and to raw natural resources, like trees and oil, are conserved.

One company that has made recycling a corporate policy is Ellen Paper. Some 90 percent of its school supplies are made of recycled papers.

Made in the Philippines, thus, regaining simpler transport and distribution systems, the products are "low carb," meaning they cause low carbon emission, thus, helping reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

Commissioner games logo lead to the atmosphere. They produce an effect similar to that in a greenhouse, thus causing average global temperature.

Imported products are "high carb" because of farms used to transport them.

Ellen's school supplies are available in leading department stores and bookstores.

WORLD Vision kids enjoy free meals at Bubbleroom.

Support for World Vision

MANDAUE mayor Thadeo Ouano recently the opening of its 200th store at The Cebuanos in Mandaue, promoting a check amount P466,000 to Mandaue Vision.

Pottercore Convenience Stores, Inc. (PCSI)'s president Johnson Robert Go, Jr. and PCSI vice president Kim Yeohs have presented the check to World Vision Publicity in Ministry director Bonita Joaquin. The money will go into the education of underprivileged children, as well as health assistance, value formation programs and provision of safe drinking water supply.

Go said the store had always been a church advocate of education, youth development and the uplift of Filipino communities.

Since March 2008, Mandaue has been working closely with World Vision Philippines to help uplift the lives of less fortunate children through, among other things, a number outreach campaign and brochure display project in all Mandaue stores.

Special guests during the event were some of the school children of the children has been supporting through World Vision.

Computer-based learning

FAST for Words is a range of computer-based language and reading intervention programs designed to address learning problems.

Developed by neuroscientists at Scientific Learning, the program trains the brain to process sound more efficiently.

In the Philippines, Fast for Words is available only at i-Thinkers, but by people with extensive experience in working with children with special needs. Ilce de Jesus, a speech pathologist, Miles Rivera, a special educator, and Gina Gomez, an occupational therapist.

A standard Fast for Word program runs for eight to 12 weeks, consisting of daily 30-minute sessions for preschoolers and 60-1 5-minutes for elementary and high school students.

Computer animation is used for a series of game-type exercises to keep students engaged and stimulated.

Fast for Word software has been used by over a million students all over the US and more than 20 other countries. Call i-Thinkers at 8920-193 or visit www.ai-think.com.

NEW BUILDING FOR CALOOCAN SCHOOL

Llano elementary school in Llano, Caloocan, inaugurated recently a one-two-story, four-classroom building. SM Prime Holdings Inc., through SM Foundation, supervised the construction and donated 50 percent of the total project cost. The other 50 percent came from investment bank Deutsche Bank AG Manila Branch. The building was constructed by the Engineering Division of SM Prime Holdings Inc. Deutsche Bank country manager Enrico Cruz and SM Foundation executive director Debbie Sy handed over the building to Principal Lorelie Angeles and assistant schools superintendent Corazon Gonzales. Also present were Deutsche Bank COO Rhonnel Fajardo, SM Foundation directors Carmen Linda Alajole and Connie Angeles, and SM Prime Holdings' Ben Mateo.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie C. Vicente

WOMEN stars, all (from rear) Charling de Jesus, (second row, from left) Lilybeth Rasonable, Marivic Aragon, Arnelia Sison-Abrogar; (5th) Nonoy; (3rd row, from left) Gigi Santiago-Lara, Wilma Galvante.

Meet the real heart of the Kapuso network

To the seventh power

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rogiel de la Cruz

SURELY, THE SEVEN women officers of GMA 7's Entertainment TV Group have very strong opinions.

At one of their weekly admin, they can be quite vociferous during a meeting.

Here, the women of Kapuso (in alphabetical order)—Arnelia Sison-Abrogar, president of GMA Worldwide and Sitio Films; Marivic T. Aragon, **vice president for** (VP) **Charling de Jesus**, assistant vice president for Magazines, Musicals, Variety and Specials; Wilma V. Galvante, senior vice president for ETV; Ida R. Arcasitas, AVP for GMA Artist Center; Gigi Santiago-Lara, SVP for Alternative Productions/QTV; and Lilybeth G. Rasonable, AVP for Drama—candidly, at times boisterously, express their views on various issues, including from favorite shows and dream programs.

Abrogar praises for a Filipino historical drama à la Rome's "Breed to the Palace." Galvante is thinking of a talk show à la "Ellen" for QTV. De Jesus hopes to see more specials and musicals. Nonoy simply wants more shows that "empower women."

Speaking of which, they also give their two cents' worth on the perceived "women power" blow in the Kapuso network.

As for the big question—"Will GMA 7 have a female president in the near future?"—at least two said, "Why not?"

Are there a lot of women in what you call in GMA 7? How does this influence/affect policy and programming?

Arnelia Sison-Abrogar: Yes, there are. The majority of TV viewers in the country are women. So, it's not surprising that there are a lot of women involved in both production and programming. Children are also an important segment of the viewing population, so "mothers' inputs" are valuable.

Marivic T. Aragon: There's the same number of male and female execs. So there's a healthy balance when it comes to policy formulation. In ETV, [president and] CEO Lizzie Gokongwei is a big plus in determining the kind of programs we produce. But having more female execs [ensures] the sensitivity and care that go with the content of our programs.

Charling de Jesus: Having a lot of women helps in determining creative concepts suitable to this arena. We have a good mix and knowledge of what majority of our audience prefers.

Wilma V. Galvante: Programming is decided by the program committee,

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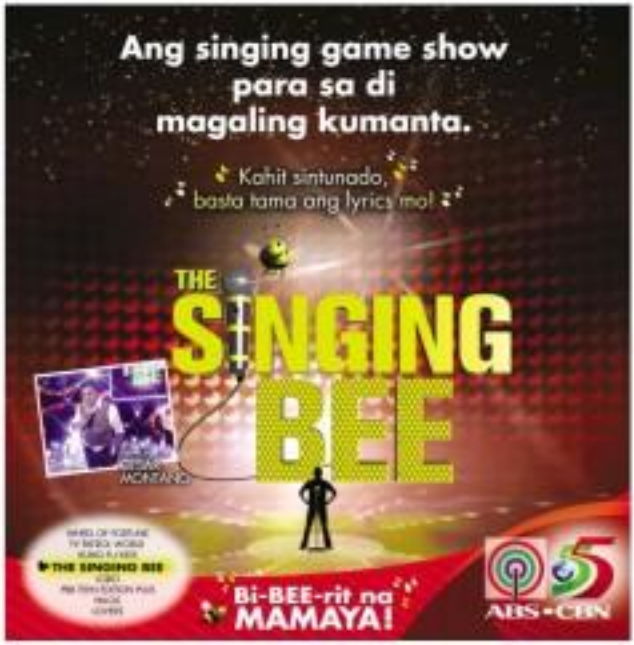

To the seventh power

Pretongate 41

composed of key officers. Gender has never been an issue in deciding either to air and what not to air. Our president Philip Gamed is a gentleman; even if he is surrounded by female execs literally breathing down his neck, we manage to arrive at the best decisions. If what you mean to ask is: Are we crazy? The answer is yes!

Ida B. Henares: There are a lot of women at the officers' level, not only in Entertainment but also in News and Public Affairs. Having more women should entail more maternity leaves and benefits!

Digs Santiago-Lane: Since a big chunk of our target audience is female, we feel that we are able to connect with this group and it helps us in our programming.

Elyhelt G. Ramonibo: In programming, the views of female execs help because we understand the likes and dislikes of women.

Is there a woman's vote in network policy formulation?

ABA: Technically, there's an equal number of male and female voters in the programming committee.

MBA: Important decisions are made not just by one person, but by a body. We are a team. Management listens to everybody. All of us have direct access to the president. One can refer to him at any given time. Pinoxon's exact? I'd say it's more of popular vote that rules.

DEM: Well, you could say that, but only because many of the decision-makers are women. However, decisions do not particularly favor one gender over the other.

WWG: None that I know of.

IMA: Every officer can effectively weave

ABROGAR: A Pinoy "Jewel in the Palace."

naval policies affecting his or her respective area.

GEL: GMA 7 is an equal opportunity employer and company policies are established objectively. When it comes to programming, I guess you could say there is a women's vote since there are a lot of women present in programming meetings.

LUB: Our views or opinions are not read as a woman's or a man's vote or opinion. It's taken as the vote or opinion of a responsible member of the network's management.

How would you like the network to be perceived by the public?

AGA: We strive to give the best in programming and, of course, public service. This is accomplished by being consistently sensitive to the needs and desires of Filipino viewers.

MVG: Exactly how it's perceived now—responsible and responsive to viewers. I was in a supermarket one weekend and a lady came up to me and said: "I'm a Kapuso and proud of it." That was heartwarming.

BOC: As a network that adheres to its core values as a company that offers its viewing public and clients only the best and the latest in innovation.

GEL: As the family that we are. I love how people take being a Kapuso to heart. It like there is feel the friendly and helpful culture that we try to cultivate among the officers and staff.

LUB: I've read feedback from viewers who see GMA 7 as an honorable organization... honestly serving the public.

Do you think there should be more female network executives?

AGA: To me, gender isn't a big issue. What's important is the capability to execute the job.

MVG: What I actually wish is for the network as a whole to have efficient and effective officers who will carry on the success of the current management.

DEM: It doesn't actually matter.

WWG: I see a need for excellent network people: male, female or gay. We will always have a need for them.

BOC: Here. But it also depends on the network's requirements. For example, engineering is male-dominated because of the nature of the task. But I think there are also areas that are best handled by women.

GEL: I think having more women execs is a good thing. But beyond that, it's really the collective work of everyone that makes a network successful.

LUB: Honestly, there are already a lot and I guess it wasn't here if there would be none.

(Email: bepainsandigs@hotmail.com).

Star City attractions

STAR CITY HAS THREE NEW FEATURES to highlight its "Summer Splash."

These are: Dino Island, with 20 lifelike dinosaurs; Star Plaza, the first and only hanging, leaping roller coaster; and Space World, which treats guests to snowball and an ice slide. Star City, located at the CCP Complex, is open 9 p.m. to 12 midnight, Monday to Thursday; 2 p.m. to 12 midnight, Friday to Sunday.

KID FIT

Dora in Manila

"Dora the Explorer Live!—Search Rescue Adventure!" is ongoing at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex until April 27.

Dora, Boots, Backpack, Diego and the rest of Dora's friends sing and dance their way into kids' hearts. Tickets available at SM Ticketline Or call 911 5555, 8742222 or 3749999.

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Powerdance marks 20th year with Big Dome concert

SHOW TIME

POWERDANCE MARKS its 20th anniversary with a gala concert, "Powerdance@20: Ulcerated in Thrill" on May 27 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Choreographer Douglas Macias says he has lined up some of his dance company's most requested pieces like "Indak," "I bigla si Big Bag," "Ugnayan at Kalikasan," "Kalantiaw at Anibal," and the award-winning "Sagwing/Pase at Kalokoran."

The show will be hosted by Julia Alvarado and KC Concepcion. Call 9908207.

Aliwan Fiesta'

More than 3,000 dancers, musicians, craftsmen and acrobats representing the country's regions from Ajanis to Ati will pit their talents in "Aliwan Fiesta"—a three-day festival featuring competitions in street-dancing, float design and the search for the Ayala ng Aliwanin May 1-3 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex, Manila. At stake is P3 million in cash prizes.

Drawing the annual fest organized by the Manila Broadcasting Company is an intercollegiate dance competition, "Pandaloy," on May 3, 7 p.m. in front of the Mise Pinatubo Scene 56, CCP Complex. Pilipinas got a total of P80,000 in cash prizes. Guest performers include Sharmick, Icy-dominol, Sponge Cola, the Xtry Girls and Mocha.

Call 8326125.

KJ 100.3 2 Stereo UDeal hosts the one-night event. Call 817 9920 or 815 9554.

POWERDANCE

Song and video contest

Inhouwers, Gabbly and Ivy cleaned are the guest performers at the "Pringles U Rap" song and video contest tomorrow at the Trinoma Mall Activity Center, Quezon City.

The competing bands—Overdose, Moth, Rubberband, Sharmick and Omnibus—vie for the grand prize of P250,000 and a video debut on the Myx music channel.

Tonight

Sinchwich, Superfire at 70s Bistro, Session Rd. Prop. 2, Quezon City. Call 4345597.

Tomorrow

Jeli Mateo at Candelaria Bay, Intercontinental Hotel, Makati. Call 7057888.

'Singing Bee' starts tonight

ABS-CBN'S "THE SINGING BEE" TAKES A bow tonight with "Sing For Kids."

In this show hosted by Cesar Montano, the focus is on song lyrics.

Competing tonight are Derek Ramsay, Jodi Sta. Maria, Bayani Agbayani, Mickey Perlada, Ronna Herrera, Valerie Concepcion, Heart Evangelista, Jay-R Siaboc, Tado, Jamie Jonquin, Brod Pitts and Pooh.

'Draw The Line'

Q-113 public affairs program "Draw The Line" (held the "On Your Mark: Draw The Line Run for A Cause" on April 13 at the Bonifacio Global City) is Taping.

More than 1,500 joined, raising P205,000 for the Women's Crisis Center, East Avenue Medical Center.

Launched on April 17, the program formerly known as "Women's Desk" airs Thursdays, 10 p.m.

'Tori & Dean'

Actress Tori Spelling as she and her husband, actor Dean McDermott, embark on Season 2 of their hit reality-sitcom series, "Tori & Dean: Inn Love" this month on Bio Channel.

The couple pursues their dream of running their bed and breakfast, Chanera Le Bec, in Hillbrook, California—while being parents to baby Liam Aaron.

The series airs Thursdays, 8 p.m.

'Mad Men'

In the season finale airing April 24, 9 p.m., Don Draper (Jon Hamm) is caught between his responsibilities as work and at home, and his wife Betty (January Jones) makes a startling discovery.

'Da Big Show'

Ogie Alcasid plays stagehand on GMA Network's newest noontime game show, "Da Big Show," airing weekdays starting today, before "Eat Bulaga."

'Livin' It Up'

QTV 11's "Livin' It Up," a lifestyle show on the rich and famous (Saturdays, at 8:30 p.m.), recently shot forthcoming episodes at Traders Hotel Manila.

The episodes will transcend key areas of the hotel, such as the Traders Club lounge and coffee corner.

Show hosts Raymond Gutierrez and Isa Lopez were treated to a buffet lunch at Lemonade, where hotel personnel manager Andrea Hinerbo rejoined them for a brief photo opportunity.

Kristine, 'Prinsesa' director kiss and make up

AS IT HE IS A PREVIOUS COLUMN about Kristine Hermosa creeping the style of "Princess ng Banyera" director Andoy Ranay sparked quite a commotion. A network insider said they had emergency production meetings to thrash out the problem.

"Kristine trusted Direk Andoy to apologize," my source revealed. "During the taping last Wednesday, Direk hugged Tin in assure her that all's forgiven and forgotten."

A defender of Tin's explained, "She really loves Direk. Parang mas kapatid din niyan, singuraduhan. She felt kanda jealous when Direk Andoy did KC's special before resuming Prinsesa" after his DV-ship last Holy Week. That's her queer way of making lambing."

According to the insider, this column served as a wake-up call. "The kinks have been ironed out as the show will go on," the source said.

Like all princesses, "Prinsesa ng Banyera," deserves a happy ending.

Dream come true

Anne Curtis is all agog for her first movie, "When Love Begins," with her dream leading man, Aga Muhlach. The Wish Filmz/Star Cinema production opens April 30. It is about a man and a woman who are afraid of commitment.

What did the movie teach her about love? "The beauty of setting someone free is that when they come back, they're yours forever," she mused. "And also that commitment is a thirty-worth taking."

Her first line in the movie? "It's not enough that you love me for what I am. You also have to love me for what I'm not."

"Should she say that line to Aga in real life if he didn't have Chariene? She replied, grinning, 'Aga has never been an issue with me as long as the guy is unattached.'

One love this all ages!

'Teleserye King'

Hail to Direk Carlo J. Caparas for bring the undisputed "Batings & Teleserye King," TV versions of his resources on GMA 7—"Iyanade Bordado," "Gumaodog" and "Yagas Ramayo"—rule the ratings game.

He makes sure that the gist of his stories and characterization are kept intact by working closely with the show's writers. With his wife, Donna Villa as an inspiration, how can Direk Carlo fail?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

March babies

Star Magic's "March babies" Gerald Anderson, Cassandra Ponti, Julia Barretto, Markus Paterson, Angeli Gonzales, Glen Sotto, Mara Schiavinato, Quintin Kleneza, Kathryn Bernardo and Thou Reyes march to the beat of success.

Leading the pack is Gerald, Kim Chiu's leading man in the local version of "My Girl." Unlimited by talk that Sam Milby ought should play the role, he says, "I'd rather focus on the character than on its gays."

What lessons has Sam taught him so far? "There are a lot of perks but nothing's for free."

There's always a trade-off. But Gerald definitely won't trade his charmed life for anything else.

New grad

Kudos to Miriam Quiambao for graduating from her Ateneo Executive Management course at the Asian Institute of Management. She plans to continue her real estate biz and may go into TV production. The new grad says, "So far so encouraging requires a good balance of IQ, EQ & AQ (adversity quotient). One must be passionate about their biz so it won't seem like work and also have the endurance to take on all the stresses."

Apparently the Miss Universe 1st runner-up has outgrown beauty pageant scenery. She's off to corporate beauty stuff.

E-mail: marie.baghotmail.com@yahoo.com

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